



*The R.<sup>c</sup> Reverend* *Father in GOD*  
*FRANCIS* Lord Bishop of *ROCHESTER*  
*and DEAN* of *WESTMINSTER*.

*Printed for Jonah Benyer in S.<sup>t</sup> Pauls Church Yard.*





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SERMONS  
AND  
DISCOURSES

On SEVERAL  
SUBJECTS and OCCASIONS.

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BY  
FRANCIS ATTERBURY, D. D.  
Late Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER,  
and Dean of WESTMINSTER.

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VOL. I.

---

LONDON:  
Printed by S. ARIS, for JONAH BOWYER, at  
the Rose in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1723.

May it please your Lordship

O accept this Testimony of  
Gratitude from a  
Man who stands  
indebted to your Lordship



Lord Bishop of Winchester  
Most Noble  
Garter

JOHN  
Father in God

To the Right Reverend

---

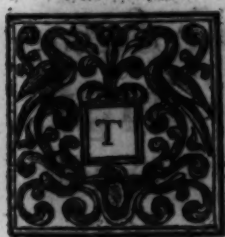
To the RIGHT REVEREND

Father in GOD,  
**JONATHAN,**

By DIVINE PERMISSION

Lord Bishop of WINCHES-  
TER, and Prelate of the  
Most Noble Order of the  
GARTER:

*May it please your Lordship*



O accept this Pub-  
lick Testimony of  
Gratitude from a  
Man who stands  
indebted to Your LORDSHIP  
A 2 for



## *The Dedication.*

for many Favours; great in themselves, but made much greater by Your free and generous manner of conferring them. For they were not the Effects of Importunity, or the just Rewards of Domestick Service; they sprang not from Dependance, or Acquaintance; being bestow'd on One, who was (at the first) little known to Your Lordship, otherwise than by his honest Endeavours to retrieve those *Synodical Rights* of the Clergy, whereof YOU, my LORD, have been all along, to Your great Honour, the avow'd Patron and Defender. I

## *The Dedication.*

I mention not this Instance of Your LORDSHIP'S Goodness to Me, with any View of distinguishing myself from Others: for You have done nothing in My case, but what You have frequently practis'd, since the time that Divine Providence, for the good of this Church. rais'd You to the Episcopal Dignity, Nothing, but what hath been successively acknowledged by all Those who have prefix'd Your Right Reverend Name to their Labours, from the Learned and Venerable Dr. Pocock,

## *The Dedication.*

down to the mean Author of the following Sermons. And, while your LORDSHIP continues to repeat the same Acts of Generosity, You must be contented to receive the very same Acknowledgments; since We, who share the Obligations, can scarce find a better way of expressing our Thanks, and doing Justice to Your Character, than by informing the world, Why, and How they were deriv'd to us.

The Secrecy, with which Wise Statesmen conduct their Designs for the Publick



## *The Dedication.*

lick Good, so, as that the Execution alone shall make the Discovery, hath by Your LORDSHIP been as carefully observ'd in Your Private Schemes of Benificence ; which have seldom appear'd till they took Effect, and surpris'd even Those, who were most nearly interested in the Success of them. By this means, You have, after the best manner, forbidden all Applications, by rendring them, not only unnecessary, but impracticable ; and have enjoy'd to the utmost, both the Honour, and the Pleasure of well-doing.



## *The Dedication.*

Indeed, there is scarce any Virtue which either disposes the Mind to deserve well of others, or adds Comeliness and Grace to deserving Actions, that doth not manifestly appear, and shine in Your LORDSHIP: and by these Recommending Circumstances You engage the very Hearts of Those You Oblige, and double the Value of every Kindness You do them.

To give, *hoping* (and looking) *for nothing again*, is the Gospel-Rule of Beneficence;  
and

## *The Dedication.*

and Your LORDSHIP hath strictly observ'd it. For none of Your Gifts have been clogg'd with Conditions; You have expected no Returns, but what every one, who hath a thankful Mind, and a just sense of his Duty, would even choose, and delight to pay: You have aim'd only at doing as became You in Your high Station; and when Those whom You advanced, did likewise as became them in *Their* Stations, Your Desires were answer'd, and You had Your Reward.

It

## *The Dedication.*

It is well known with what Courtesy and Ease You have always treated Those whom You have once oblig'd; on that very account they were sure of having a nearer and freer Access to YOUR LORDSHIP, instead of being kept to the Usual Terms of distance and dependence. You have been so far from ever putting any Man in mind of what You have done for him, that You would never bear to be put in mind of it Your self; and have not been more careful to prevent Solicitations, than



## *The Dedication.*

than to avoid Acknowledgments. You had the Thanks of Your Own Conscience, and You neither needed nor desir'd any Other.

It is the peculiar Happiness of those Persons, on whom Your Favours are plac'd, that they receive them from an Hand, eminent for its great and lasting Services to our Church and Constitution. For there are I think, no Enemies whatsoever, either of her Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship, (either within doors, or without) but what Your  
LORD-



## *The Dedication.*

LORDSHIP hath, in the Course  
of Your Episcopal Govern-  
ment, withstood, and baffled.

You were one of those  
*Seven Prelates* (worthy of  
honourable remembrance)  
who gave the most effectual  
Check to the Attempts  
of *Popery* in a late Reign,  
and preserv'd the pure Pro-  
fession of Christianity among  
us by the same Suffering  
Methods by which it was  
at first propagated. It can  
never be forgotten, with  
what a true Christian Spirit  
(such as animated the chief  
Pastors of the Church, in  
those

## *The Dedication.*

those Days, when Episcopacy was a certain Step to Martyrdom ) You stood forth, and offer'd Your self willingly to *witness* a good *Confession*; how Solicitous You were, lest the *Tower-Gates* should have been shut upon these Excellent Persons, e'er Your Distance would permit You to accompany them in their glorious Confinement; to partake of which, You made as much haste, as some Men afterwards did, to draw the Advantages of it to themselves; under a new Turn of Affairs.

When

## *The Dedication.*

When That happen'd,  
New Occasions also of serving the Church, offer'd themselves to Your Lordship, which You as readily embrac'd. The Fatherly Vigilance, and Exemplary Firmness you then shew'd in frustrating the Methods made use of to perpetuate *Schism*, by unauthoriz'd *Schools* and *Seminaries*, were observ'd with Pleasure, and own'd with Thanks, by All that wish'd well to our Establishment. Nor could They, who wish'd ill to it, justly blame an Endeavour of securing



## *The Dedication.*

curing to the *Ordinary* that Power, which he always enjoy'd, and of which he is not yet divested; and of confining a Legal Indulgence within the Bounds prescrib'd by that Law which gave Birth to it.

Shall I take notice here, of the Seasonable and Liberal Encouragements You reach'd out to a worthy *Presbyter* of this Church, who repress'd the bold Attempts of *Sectaries* by his Learned and Accurate Writings? It may, I think, become me to mention even this Particular  
Act



## *The Dedication.*

Act of Your Bounty, since it had a General Aim, and Influence, and was not terminated in the *Person*, how deserving soever, but in the *Righteous Cause* which he espous'd; and which, as YOUR LORDSHIP'S fix'd Judgment leads You, by all Lawful Means to support, so Your Temper inclines You rather to promote by Rewards, than Punishments.

The Fears of Popery were scarce remov'd, when *Heresy* began to diffuse its Venom; and the sacred Mysteries of our Faith were,  
3A after

## *The Dedication.*

after a daring and petulant manner, expos'd to publick Scorn, even in one of those famous *Seats of Knowledge*, which then were, and still are, the chief Bulwarks of true Religion. It pleas'd God, that You were now possess'd of a *See*, which gave You Power to Visit and Correct such Enormities; and You exerted that Power with Zeal and Vigour; driving out from the Schools of Learning a Disciple of *Arius*, who had all the Craft and Obstinacy of his Master, and the good luck, for some time, to be as well Supported.

a

The

## *The Dedication.*

The Prosecution of this Cause was attended with so many Difficulties, as would have shaken a Resolution less firm than YOUR LORDSHIP'S. But the Discharge of Your great Trust, and the Maintenance of God's Truth, were the Springs which had set You on work; and They who act upon such Principles, can never be discourag'd.

The Issue of that memorable Struggle, as it was of great Advantage to the Church, and the Universities, in Other Respects, so particularly in This; that it  
fix'd



## *The Dedication.*

fix'd the Power of *Visitors* (not till then acknowledg'd Final) upon the sure Foundation of a *Judgment* in *Parliament*; and, by that means, made so effectual a Provision for the future Quiet of those Learned Bodies, as may be reckon'd equal to the greatest Benefactions.

This, and another Parliamentary Decision, which Your LORDSHIP, not long after, with equal Difficulty, obtain'd; and by which the *Bishop's* sole Right to judge of the *Qualifications* of *Persons* applying for *Institution*, was unalterably  
a 2 confirm'd

## *The Dedication.*

confirm'd; are such Instances of Your Magnanimity, and Publick Spirit, as will remain in Memory, while the Church, or the Law of *England* lasts. For they were not Temporary Services, to be made use of, and talk'd of for a while, and then forgotten; but (as the Historian truly said of his own Writings) *Perpetual Acquisitions*, laid up for the benefit of succeeding Ages. And He, who contends for Common Rights, with Lower Aims than these, means not the Constitution, but Himself;

## *The Dedication.*

self; and deserves not the Applause even of his Own Times, when he is not disinterested enough to look beyond them.

It was the Sense of these Important Services, already done by Your LORDSHIP, that occasion'd a general Joy among good Men, when they heard of your intended Translation to the See of *Winchester*. Particularly, the Clergy of that Diocese, and the University of *Oxford*, who were chiefly concern'd in the Consequences of Your Promotion, receiv'd



## *The Dedication.*

the first Accounts of it with the greatest Satisfaction, and were in Pain, while the Event was suspended --- A Suspence, which we may presume design'd to do honour to Your LORDSHIP, and to justify the Wisdom of her Majesty's Choice; since it tended to shew, how impatiently You were expected, and desir'd, by Those who were to be under Your Inspection and Authority.

Among all the Learned Bodies, whose Hopes and Fears were then in greatest Agitation, None was more  
(or

## *The Dedication.*

(or with more Reason) solicitous than that *House*, which had the Honour of Educating Your LORDSHIP, and instilling into Your Mind those Principles, which whoever hath once imbib'd, seldom forsakes; and whosoever forsakes not, must immoveably adhere to the true Interests of the Church, and Monarchy. Whilst that fruitful Parent thus trains up her Children, She is secure of Protection and Favour from Your LORDSHIP, or from Whoever else He be, that hath not been withheld from doing good to her, in

102                      a 4                      Evil

## *The Dedication.*

Evil Days, by malicious and groundless Clamours. Under Your, and Their Shadow She hath *rested at Noon*, when the Heat was most intense, and scorching: She hath flourish'd hitherto, and will, I doubt not, still continue to flourish, tho' Her Enemies be Many and Mighty, and daily *shoot out their Arrows against her, even bitter Words*. She looks upon Your LORDSHIP's Advancement, as a sure Token, that Divine Providence is still propitious to Her; and, encourag'd by this Prospect, She is ready to take up her Parable, and



## *The Dedication.*

and say: Joseph is a fruitful Bough, even a fruitful Bough by a Well, whose Branches run over the Wall. The Archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his Bow abode in Strength, and the Arms of his Hands were made strong by the Hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.

In the Names of These, and of all Other the true Friends and Sons of the Church, permit me, MY LORD, to congratulate Your Accession to a See, which will afford You such a Sphere

## *The Dedication.*

Sphere of Action as You were made to fill; which will furnish You with many welcome Opportunities of doing Good, of rewarding Merit, of cherishing Piety and Virtue, of encouraging Persons, distinguish'd by their Learning, their undaunted Assertion of Divine Truths, and undissembled Zeal for our admirable Constitution in Church and State; which will, in short, enable You to carry on all those Excellent Designs, to which Your Upright and Bountiful Heart is religiously inclin'd.

What

## *The Dedication,*

What may We not promise our selves from the Influence of Your LORDSHIP's Conduct in so Eminent a Station? from Your known Courage and Fervency in the Cause of God, and his Church? from the Greatness of Your Mind, the Goodness of Your Intentions, and the Soundness of Your Principles? from that Habitual Love of *Worthy Deeds*, which You contracted so early, and have by long Practice confirm'd? and from Your Experience of the Success that hath attended You in all You have



## *The Dedication.*

have suffer'd, or done for the  
Publick?

By Your LORDSHIP'S  
Means, and within the Cir-  
cle of Your Power, we doubt  
not but to see all proper Steps  
taken towards reviving de-  
cay'd Discipline; and resto-  
ring Church-Censures to  
their due Force and Credit;  
towards detecting and defeat-  
ing Clandestine Simoniackal  
Contracts; towards securing  
the Rights and Revenues of  
the Clergy from Encroach-  
ments, rescuing their Persons  
and sacred Function from  
Contempt, and freeing Re-  
ligion

## *The Dedication.*

ligion it self from the Insults now made upon it by Blaphemous Tongues, and Pens, with equal Boldness and Impunity.

These, MY LORD, are the Expectations with which the best Men are now entertaining themselves, and which You are hastning to make good. The Actions of the past Years of Your Life, are a sure Earnest and Pledge of what those to come will produce, and the bright Example You have set long ago to Your Self, and to Others, shall grow brighter in Proportion to Your Power,  
2 and

## *The Dedication.*

and Opportunities: for *the Path of the Just is as the Shining Light, that shineth more and more unto a perfect Day.*

The great Honours and Revenues, still annex'd to some few Stations in the Church, are the chief Mark which Impiety, Envy, and Sacrilege aim at; and much they have to say, why Religion should be stripp'd of these superfluous and unprofitable Ornaments. But Malice it self is disarm'd, and all Objections are silenc'd, when those Rewards are bestow'd on Men, who by  
their



## *The Dedication.*

their Birth, and Virtues,  
and Experience, are every  
way qualify'd for them;  
whose Hereditary Fortunes,  
and Noble Natures, set them  
above all mean Designs of  
diverting the Patrimony of  
the Church to improper U-  
ses; and who are ready, there-  
fore, to reflect back upon  
Religion the Advantages  
they derive from thence, and  
to abound in all the Offices  
of Hospitality and Charity,  
in proportion to what they  
enjoy. I need not say, how  
far these Excellent Qualities  
belong to Your LORDSHIP,  
and

## *The Dedication.*

and are a confes'd part of  
Your Character.

When we compare the  
Good which You have done,  
MY LORD, with that which  
You have receiv'd, it brings  
to mind the Apposite Passage  
of the Prophet : *The Liberal*  
*deviseth Liberal things, and by*  
*Liberal things shall he be e-*  
*stablish'd.* Your LORDSHIP, is  
an Illustrious Instance of this  
Truth ; for the Blessings,  
You have so plentifully scat-  
ter'd on those beneath You,  
have been multiply'd on  
Your own Head from above;  
and You have reap'd the  
Benefits

## *The Dedication.*

Benefits of a most generous and firm Friendship, in like manner as You sow'd them. You have given, my Lord, and it hath been given unto You; good Measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over: for with the same Measure, which You meted withal, hath it been (and may it ever be) measured to you again.

Your Happiness, My LORD, is now as compleat as all the Prosperous Circumstances of Life can make it; and Your Private Domestick Felicities (a Case rarely  
b known)



## *The Dedication.*

known) are no ways inferior to those of a more Publick and Splendid Nature. For You are happy in the best of *Ladies*, as She is in the Tenderest of *Husbands*; You have the best of *Brothers*, and the best of *Children*; those *Arrows in the Hand of the Mighty Man*, which are both his Ornament, and Defence: God be thanked, Your *Quiver is full of them*! And *He* amongst them, who is to inherit Your Ample Fortunes, doth, by his Early Love of Learning, and most Vertuous Disposition, promise, that he will  
one

## *The Dedication.*

one day do Honour even to  
that Honourable Stock from  
which he springs.

With such a Variety of  
Blessings hath God surround-  
ed You! and, that nothing  
may be wanting, he hath  
blest'd You likewise with an  
Heart and Skill to use them.  
May You, thro' his Goodness,  
enjoy an uninterrupted Con-  
tinuance of them; and such  
a Length of Days, as will give  
You Room to improve them  
to the utmost, for His Glory,  
and the Pulick Benefit.

This, MY LORD, is the  
Unanimous Wish of all that  
b 2 have

## *The Dedication.*

have been Oblig'd by You,  
of All that Honour You, that  
is, of All that truly Know  
You; but of none more than  
Him, who now offers these  
Sermons to Your Lordship,  
and with that Sincerity which  
becomes a Preacher of Divine  
Truth, professes himself to  
be, by all the Tyes of Esteem,  
and Duty, Gratitude, and  
Inclination,

*Your* LORDSHIP'S

*most Devoted,*

*and ever Faithful Servant.*

**FRANCIS ATTERBURY.**





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for Kings, and all that are in Authority;  
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be done unto, explain d'  $\Gamma\epsilon\rho\sigma\tau\upsilon\nu$  r.  $\Gamma\epsilon\rho\sigma\tau\upsilon\nu$   
St. Matth. vii. 12. All things, whatsoever  
Ye would that Men should do unto You  
do even so unto them; for this is the Law  
and the Prophets.

SERM. X. Of Religious Retirement.  
St. Matth. xiv. 23. When he had sent  
the multitude away, he went up into a Mountain  
apart to Pray.



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Reformation.

*The Fierceness of Man shall turn to thy  
Praise, and the Fierceness of thee  
shalt thou refrain. Psalm. 76. 10.*

By FRANCIS ATTERBURY, D. D.  
(late) Lord Bishop of *Rocheſter*, and  
Dean of *Westminster*.

Printed at the *Theatre* at *Oxford* in the Year 1688  
and now Reprinting for JONAH BOWYER  
at the *Rose* in *St. Paul's-Church-Yard*.



*The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving.*

A  
SERMON

Preach'd before the

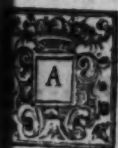
QUEEN

AT  
WHITE - HALL;

MAR 29. 1692.

PSALM L. 14.

*Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*



AMONG the many Excellen-  
cies of this pious Collection of  
Hymns, for which so particular  
Value hath been set upon it by the  
Church of God in all Ages, this is not

SERM.  
I.

VOL. I.

B

the

SERM. the least, that the true Price of Duties is  
 I. there justly stated; Men are call'd off  
 from resting in the outward Shew of Religion, in Ceremonies and Ritual Observances; and taught rather to practise (that which was shadow'd out by these Rites, and to which they were design'd to lead) sound inward Virtue, and Piety.

The several Composers of these Hymns were *Prophets*; Persons, whose Business it was, not only to foretel Events for the Benefit of the Church in succeeding times, but to correct and reform also what was amiss in that Race of Men, with whom they liv'd and convers'd; to preserve a foolish People from Idolatry, and false Worship; to rescue the Law from corrupt Glosses, and superstitious Abuses; and to put Men in mind of (what they were so willing to forget) that Eternal and Invariable Rule which was before these *Positive* Duties would continue after them, and was to be observ'd, even Then, in preference to them.



*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

3

The Discharge, I say, of this part of SERM.  
the Prophetick Office taking up so much <sup>I.</sup>  
room in the Book of *Psalms*; this hath  
been one reason, among many others,  
why they have been always so highly  
esteem'd; because we are from hence  
furnish'd with a proper Reply to an Ar-  
gument commonly made use of by Un-  
believers; who look upon all reveal'd  
Religions, as Pious Frauds, and Impo-  
stures, on the account of the Prejudices  
they have entertain'd in relation to That  
of the *Jews*: The whole of which they  
first suppose to lie in External Perfor-  
mances, and then easily persuade them-  
selves, that God could never be the Au-  
thor of such a mere Piece of Pageantry,  
and empty Formality, nor delight in a  
Worship which consisted purely in a  
Number of odd unaccountable Ceremo-  
nies. Which Objections of theirs we  
should not be able thoroughly to answer,  
unless we could prove (chiefly out of the  
*Psalms*, and other Parts of the Prophe-  
tick Writings) that the Jewish Religion  
was somewhat more than bare Outside  
and Shew; and that Inward Purity, and

SERM.

I.

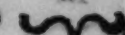
Then, as well as Now. One great Instance of this Proof we have in the Words now before us; which are taken from a Psalm of *Asaph*, written on purpose to set out the Weakness and Worthlessness of External Performances, when compar'd with more Substantial and Vital Duties. To enforce which Doctrine, God himself is brought in, as delivering it. *Hear, O my People, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.* The Preface is very solemn; and, therefore, what it usher in, we may be sure, is of no common Importance: *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-Offerings, to have been continually before me.* That is, I will not So reprove thee for any Failures in thy Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, as if These were the Only, or the Chief Things I requir'd of thee. *I will take no Bullock out of thy House, nor He-goat out of thy Folds.* I prescribe not Sacrifices [to thee, for my Own sake, because I needed them: *For every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle up*

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

5

SERM.

I.



*on a thousand Hills.* Mine they are, and were, before ever I commanded thee to offer them to Me; so that (as it follows) *If I were hungry, yet would I not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.* But can ye be so gross and senseless, as to think me liable to Hunger and Thirst? as to imagine that Wants of That kind can touch me? *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* --- Thus doth he expostulate severely with them, after the most graceful manner of the Eastern Poetry. The Issue of which is, a plain and full Resolution of the Case, in those few Words of the Text. --- *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.* Would you do your Homage the most agreeable Way? would you render the most acceptable of Services? *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*

July 27

The Use I intend to make of these Words is, from hence to raise some Thoughts about that very excellent and important Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving: A Subject, not unfit to be discours'd of, at this Time; whether we

B 3

consider,



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I.



consider, either the more than ordinary Coldness that appears of late in Mens Tempers towards the Practice of this (or any other) Part of a warm and affecting Devotion; the Great Occasion of setting aside this particular Day in the Kalendar, some Years ago; or the New Instances of Mercy and Goodness, which God hath lately been pleas'd to bestow upon us: answering at last the many *Prayers and Fastings*, by which we have besought him so long for the Establishment of their Majesties Throne, and for the Success of their Arms; and giving us, in his own good time, an Opportunity of appearing before him in the more delightful Part of our Duty, *with the voice of Joy and Praise, with a multitude that keep Holy-days.*

Ps. xlii. 4.

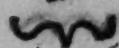
*Offer unto God Thanksgiving---* Which that we may do, let us enquire first, how we are to *Understand* this Command of Offering Praise and Thanksgiving unto God; and then how *Reasonable* it is, that we should comply with it.

Our

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

7  
SERM.

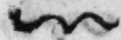
I.



Our Enquiry into what is *meant* here, will be very short: For who is there, that understands any thing of Religion, but knows, that the offering Praise and Thanks to God implies, our having a lively and devout Sense of his Excellencies, and of his Benefits; our recollecting them with Humility and Thankfulness of heart; and our expressing these Inward Affections by suitable Outward Signs; by reverent and lowly Postures of Body, by Songs, and Hymns, and Spiritual Ejaculations; either Privately, or Publickly; either in the Customary and Daily Service of the Church, or in its more Solemn Assemblies, conven'd upon Extraordinary Occasions? This is the Account, which every Christian easily gives himself of it; and which, therefore, it would be needless to enlarge upon. I shall only take notice on this Head, That Praise and Thanksgiving do, in Strictness of Speech, signify things somewhat different. Our *Praise* properly terminates in God, on the account of his natural Excellencies and Perfections; and is that Act of Devo-

SERM.

I.



tion by which we confess and admire his several Attributes: But *Thanksgiving* is a narrower Duty; and Imports only a grateful Sense and Acknowledgment of past Mercies. We Praise God for all his glorious Acts, of every kind, that regard either Us, or Other Men; for his very *Vengeance*, and those *Judgments* which he sometimes sends *abroad in the Earth*: But we thank him (properly speaking) for the Instances of his *Goodness* alone; and for such only of these, as We our selves are some way concern'd in. This, I say, is what the two Words strictly imply: But since the Language of Scripture is generally less exact, and useth Either of them often to express the Other by, I shall not think my self oblig'd, in what follows, thus nicely always to distinguish them.

Now the great *Reasonableness* of this Duty of Praise, or Thanksgiving, and our several *Obligations* to it, will appear; if we either consider it *absolutely* in it self as the Debt of our Natures; or *compare* it with other Duties, and shew the Rank

it



## Praise and Thanksgiving.

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SERM.

I.

it bears among them; or set out, in the last place, some of its peculiar *Properties* and *Advantages*, with regard to the devout Performer of it.

I. The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving, consider'd *absolutely* in it self, is, I say, the Debt, and Law of our Nature. We had such Faculties bestowed on us by our Creator, as made us capable of satisfying this Debt, and obeying this Law; and they never, therefore, work more naturally and freely, than when they are thus employ'd.

I.

'Tis one of the earliest Instructions given us by Philosophy, and which hath ever since been approved and inculcated by the wisest Men of all Ages. That the Original Design of making Man was, that he might Praise and Honour Him who made him. When God had finish'd this goodly Frame of things, we call *the World*, and put together the several Parts of it, according to his infinite Wisdom, in exact Number, Weight, and Measure; there was still wanting a Creature

SERM.

I.



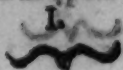
ture in these lower Regions, that could apprehend the Beauty, Order, and exquisite Contrivance of it; that from contemplating the Gift, might be able to raise it self up to the great Giver, and do Honour to all his Attributes. Every thing indeed that God made, did, in some Sense, glorify its Author, inasmuch as it carried upon it the plain Mark and Impress of the Deity, and was an Effect worthy of that first Cause from whence it flowed; and Thus might the *Heavens* be said, at the first Moment in which they stood forth, *to declare his Glory, and the Firmament to shew his Handiwork*: But this was an imperfect, and defective Glory; the Sign was of no signification here below, whilst there was no one here as yet to take Notice of it. Man, therefore, was form'd to supply this Want; endued with Powers fit to find out, and to acknowledge these unlimited Perfections; and then put into this Temple of God, this lower World, as the Priest of Nature, to offer up the Incense of Thanks and Praise for the mute and the insensible Part of the Creation.

Ps. xix. 1.

This,

## Praise and Thanksgiving.

II  
SERM.



This, I say, hath been the Opinion all along of the most thoughtful Men, down from the most ancient Times : And tho' it be not Demonstrative, yet is it what we cannot but judge highly reasonable, if we do but allow, that Man was made for some End, or other; and that he is capable of perceiving that End. For then, let us search and enquire never so much, we shall find no Other Account of him that we can rest upon so well. If we say, That he was made purely for the good Pleasure of God; this is, in effect, to say, that he was made for no Determinate End; or for none, at least, that We can discern. If we say, That he was design'd as an Instance of the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of God; This indeed may be the Reason of his *Being* in general; for 'tis the common Reason of the Being of every Thing besides. But it gives no account, why he was made *such* a Being as he is, a reflecting, thoughtful, inquisitive Being: The particular Reason of this seems most aptly to be drawn



SERM. drawn from the Praise and Honour that  
 I. was (not only to redound to God from  
 him, but) to be given to God by him.

This Duty, therefore, is the Debt and Law of our Nature. And it will more distinctly appear to be such, if we consider the two Ruling Faculties of our Mind, the *Understanding*, and the *Will*, apart; in both which it is deeply founded: In the Understanding, as in the Principle of Reason, which owns and acknowledges it; in the Will, as in the Fountain of Gratitude and Return, which prompts, and even constrains us to pay it.

*Reason* was given us as a Rule and Measure, by the help of which we were to proportion our Esteem of every thing, according to the Degrees of Perfection and Goodness which we found therein. It cannot, therefore, if it doth its Office at all, but apprehend God as the best and most perfect Being; it must needs see, and own, and admire his infinite Perfections. And this is what is strictly meant by *Praise*; which, therefore, is  
 express'd

## Praise and Thanksgiving.

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express'd in Scripture by *confessing* to God, SERM. I.  
and *acknowledging* him; by *ascribing* to  
him what is his Due; and, as far as This  
Sense of the Word reaches, 'tis impossi-  
ble to *think* of God without praising  
him. For it depends not on the Under-  
standing how it shall apprehend Things,  
any more than it doth on the Eye, how  
Visible Objects shall appear to it.

The Duty takes a farther and surer  
Hold of us, by the Means of our *Will*,  
and that strong Bent towards *Gratitude*,  
which the Author of our Nature hath  
implanted in it. There is not a more  
active Principle than This in the Mind  
of Man; and surely, that which deserves  
its utmost Force, and should set all its  
Springs a-work, is God; the Great and  
Universal Benefactor, from whom alone  
we receiv'd whatever we either have,  
or are, and to whom we can possibly re-  
pay nothing but our Praises, or (to speak  
more properly on this Head, and ac-  
cording to the strict Import of the Word)  
our Thanksgivings. *Who hath first given* Rom. xi.  
35, 36.  
*to God*, (saith the great Apostle in his  
usual

SERM. usual Figure) *and it shall be recompenc'd*  
 I. *unto him again?* A Gift, it seems, al-  
 ways requires a Recompence: Nay, but  
*of him, and through him, and to him are*  
*all things; Of him, as the Author; Through*  
*him, as the Preserver and Governor; To*  
*him, as the End and Perfection of all*  
*Things: To whom, therefore, (as it fol-*  
*lows) be Glory for ever, Amen!*

Gratitude consists in an equal Return  
 of Benefits, if we are able; or of Thanks,  
 if we are not: which Thanks, therefore,  
 must rise always in Proportion as the  
 Favours receiv'd are great, and the Re-  
 ceiver incapable of making any other  
 Sort of Requital. Now, since no Man  
 hath benefited God at any time, and yet  
 every Man, in each Moment of his Life,  
 is continually benefited by him, what  
 strong Obligations must we needs be un-  
 der to Thank him? 'Tis true, our Thanks  
 are really as insignificant to Him, as any  
 other Kind of Return would be; in them-  
 selves, indeed, they are worthless; but his  
 Goodness hath put a Value upon them.  
 He hath declar'd, he will accept them in  
 lieu of the vast Debt we owe: and, after

that



## Praise and Thanksgiving.

15

that, which is fittest for us, to dispute <sup>SERM.</sup>  
how they come to be taken as an *Equiva-*  
*lent*, or to pay them?

It is, therefore, the Voice of Nature  
(as far as Gratitude it self is so) that the  
Good Things we receive from above,  
should be sent back again thither in  
Thanks and Praises, *as the Rivers run* <sup>Ecclef.</sup>  
*into the Sea; to the Place* (the Ocean of <sup>i. 7.</sup>  
Beneficence,) *from whence the Rivers*  
*come, thither should they return again.*

II. We have consider'd the Duty II.  
*absolutely*; we are now to *compare* it  
with Others, and to see what Rank it  
bears among them. And here we shall  
find, that, among all the Acts of Reli-  
gion, immediately address'd to God, This  
is much the Noblest, and most Excellent;  
as it must needs be, if what hath been laid  
down be allow'd, that the End of Man's  
Creation was, to praise and glorify God.  
For That cannot but be the most noble  
and excellent Act of any Being, which  
best answers the End and Design of it.  
Other Parts of Devotion, such as *Con-*  
*fession* and *Prayer*, seem not Oringially  
to

SERM. I. to have been design'd for Man, nor Man for them. They imply *Guilt*, and *Want*, with which the *State of Innocence* was not acquainted. Had Man continu'd in that Estate, his Worship (like the Devotions of Angels) had been paid to Heaven in pure Acts of Thanksgiving; and nothing had been left for him to do, beyond the enjoying the good Things of Life, as Nature directed, and praising the God of Nature who bestow'd them. But being fallen from Innocence, and Abundance; having contracted Guilt, and forfeited his Right to all sorts of Mercies; Prayer and Confession became necessary for a time, to retrieve the Loss, and restore him to that State, wherein he should be able to live without them. These are fitted, therefore, for a lower Dispensation; before which, in Paradise, there was nothing but Praise, and after which, there shall be nothing but that, in Heaven. Our perfect State did at first, and will at last consist in the Performance of this Duty; and herein, therefore, lies the Excellence and the Honour of our Nature.

Praise and Thanksgiving.

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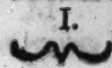
SERM.

I.

'Tis the same way of Reasoning, by which the Apostle hath given the preference to Charity, beyond Faith, and Hope, and every Spiritual Gift. *Charity* 1 Cor. xiii. 8. *never faileth*, saith he; meaning, that it is not a Virtue useful only in This Life, but will accompany us also into the Next: *But whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away*: These are Gifts of a Temporary Advantage, and shall all perish in the using. *For we know in part*, Ver. 9. *and we prophesy in part*: Our present State is imperfect; and, therefore, what belongs to That, and only That, must be imperfect too. *But when that which is Perfect* Ver. 10. *come, then that which is in Part shall be done away*. The Argument of St. Paul, we see, which sets Charity above the rest of Christian Graces, will give Praise also the Pre-eminence over all other Parts of Christian Worship; and we may conclude Our reasoning, therefore, as He doth His: *And now abideth Confession,*  
VOL. I. *Prayer*



TERM Prayer, and Praise, these three; but the

I.  greatest of these is Praise

It is so, certainly, on other Accounts, as well as this; particularly, as it is the most *disinterested* Branch of our Religious Service; such as hath the most of God, and the least of our Selves in it; any we pay; and therefore approaching the nearest of any to a pure, and free, and perfect Act of Homage. For though good Action doth not grow immediately worthless by being done with the Prospect of Advantage, as Some have strangely imagin'd; yet it will be allow'd to suppose, that its being done without the Mixture of that End, or with as little of it as is possible, recommends it so much the more, and raises the Price of it. *Job i. 9.* *Job fear God for nought?* was an Objection of Satan; which imply'd, that those Duties were most valuable, where our own Interest was least aim'd at. And God seems, by the Commission he then gave Satan to try Experiments upon us, thus far to have allow'd his Plea. Now our Requests for future, and even of

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

19

Acknowledgements of past Mercies center **SERM.**

**I.**

purely in our selves; our own Interest is the direct Aim of them. But Praise is a generous and unmercenary Principle, which proposes no other End to it self, but to do, as is fit for a Creature endow'd with such Faculties to do, towards the most perfect and beneficent of Beings; and to pay the willing Tribute of Honour there, where the Voice of Reason directs us to pay it. God hath indeed annex'd a Blessing to the Duty; and when we know this, we cannot chuse, while we are performing the Duty, but have some Regard to the Blessing which belongs to it. However, that is not the direct Aim of our Devotions, nor was it the first Motive that stirr'd us up to them. Had it been so, we should naturally have betaken our selves to Prayer, and breath'd out our desires in That Form wherein they are most properly convey'd.

In short, Praise is our most excellent Work, a Work common to the Church Triumphant and Militant, and which lifts us up into a Communion

SERM.  
I

and Fellowship with Angels. The Matter, about which it is conversant, is always the Perfections of God's Nature and the Act it self is the Perfection of Ours.

III. I come now, in the last place, to set out some of its peculiar *Properties and Advantages*, which recommend it to the Devout Performer. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, It is the most *pleasing* Part of our Devotions. It proceeds always from a Lively Chearful Temper of Mind; and it cherishes, and improves what it proceeds from.

Ps. cxlvii.  
1.

*For it is good to sing Praise unto our God*, (says one, whose Experience, in this Case, we may rely upon *for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely*. Petition and Confession are the Language of the Indigent and the Guilty; the Breathings of a sad and a contrite Spirit: *Is any afflicted? let him pray*: But

James v.  
13.

*is any merry? let him sing Psalms*. The most usual and natural way of Men expressing the Mirth of their Hearts is, in a Song; and Songs are the very Language of Praise; to the expressing of



## *Praise and Thanksgiving.*

21

SERM.

I

of which they are in a peculiar manner appropriated, and are scarce of any other Use in Religion. Indeed, the whole Composition of this Duty is such, as throughout speaks Ease and Delight to the Mind: It proceeds from *Love*, and from *Thankfulness*; from *Love*, the Fountain of Pleasure, the Passion, which gives every Thing we do, or enjoy, its Relish and Agreeableness. From *Thankfulness*, which involves in it the Memory of past Benefits; the actual Presence of them to the Mind, and the repeated Enjoyment of them. And as its *Principle*, such is its *End* also. For it procureth Quiet and Ease to the Mind, by doing somewhat towards satisfying that Debt which it labours under; by delivering it of those Thoughts of Praise and Gratitude, those Exultations it is so full of; and which would grow uneasy and troublesome to it, if they were kept in. The *Thankful refrain'd*, it would be *Pain and Grief to them*: But then, then Ps. lxxiii.  
their *Soul satisfy'd as with Marrow* 5.  
and *Fatness, when their Mouth praiseth*  
*God with Joyful Lips.*



2. It is another distinguishing Property of Divine Praise, that it enlarges the Powers and Capacities of our Souls turning them from little and low Things upon their Greatest and Noblest Object, the Divine Nature; and employing them in the Discovery and Admiration of those several Perfections that adorn it. We see, what Difference there is between Man and Man; such, there is hardly greater between Man and Beast: And this proceeds chiefly from the different Sphere of Thought which they act in, and the different Objects they converse with. The Mind is Essentially the same in the Peasant and the Prince; the Forces of it naturally equal in the untaught Man, and the Philosopher; only the One of these is busied in mean Affairs, and within narrower Bounds, the Other exercises himself in things of weight and moment, and This it is that puts the wide Distance between them. Noble Objects are to the Mind, what the Sun-Beams are to a Bud, or Flower: They open and unfold, as it were, the Leaves of it; and

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

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it upon exerting and spreading it self SERM.  
every way; and call forth all those  
Powers, that lie hid and lock'd up in  
it. The Praise and Admiration of God,  
therefore, brings this Advantage along  
with it, that it sets our Faculties upon  
their full Stretch, and improves them to  
all the Degrees of Perfection, of which  
they are capable.

3. It, farther, promotes in us an ex-  
quisite Sense of God's Honour, and an  
high Indignation of mind at every  
thing that openly profanes it. For what  
we value and delight in, we cannot with  
Patience hear slighted, or abus'd. Our  
Own Praises, which we are constantly  
putting up, will be a *Spur* to us toward  
procuring and promoting the Divine  
Glory in every Other Instance; and will  
make us set our Faces against all open  
and avow'd Impieties. Which, me-  
thinks, should be consider'd a little by  
such as would be thought not to be  
wanting in this Duty, and yet are often  
silent under the foulest Dishonours done  
to Religion, and its great Author. For,  
namely to hear God's Name and Worship  
vilified



SERM. vilified by Others, is no very good Argument, that we have been us'd to Honour and Reverence him in good earnest, Our selves.

4. It will, beyond all this, work in us a deep Humility, and Consciouſness of our own Imperfections. Upon a frequent Attention to God and his Attributes, we shall easily discover our own Weakness and Emptiness; Our swelling Thoughts of our selves will abate, and we shall see and feel, that we *are altogether lighter, to be laid in the Balance, than Vanity.* And This is a Lesson, which, to the greatest Part of Mankind, is, I think, very well worth learning. We are naturally Presumptuous and Vain; full of Our selves, and regardless of every thing besides: Especially, when some little Outward Privileges distinguish Us from the rest of Mankind; then, 'tis odds, but we look into Our selves with great degrees of Complacency; and are *wiser (and are every way) in our own Conceit than seven Men, that can render a Reason.* Now nothing will contribute so much to the Cure of this

Pl. lxi.

Prov.  
xxvi. 16.

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

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SERM.



this Vanity, as a due Attention to God's Excellencies, and Perfections: by comparing These with Those which, we imagine, belong to us, we shall learn, *not to think of our selves more highly than we ought to think of our selves, but to think soberly;* We shall find more Satisfaction in looking upwards, and humbling our selves before our common Creator, than in casting our Eyes downwards with Scorn upon our Fellow Creatures, and setting at nought any Part of the Work of his Hands. The vast distance we are at from Real and Infinite Worth will astonish us so much, that we shall not be tempted to value Our selves upon those lesser Degrees of Pre-eminence, which Custom, or Opinion, or some little accidental Advantages have given Us over other Men.

5. I shall mention but one Use of it more, and 'tis This; That a conscientious Praise of God will keep Us back from all false and mean Praises, all Flattery and Servile Flatteries, such as are in Use among Men. Praising, as 'tis commonly

Rom, xii.

3.

SERM.

I.

commonly manag'd, is nothing else but a Tryal of Skill upon a Man, how many good Things we can possibly say of him. All the Treasuries of Oratory are ransack'd, all the fine things that ever were said are heap'd together, for his sake; and No matter, whether it belongs to him, or not; so there be but enough on't. Which is one deplorable Instance, among a thousand, of the Bateness of humane Nature, its small Regard to Truth and Justice; to Right, or Wrong; to what is, or is not to be praised. But He, who hath a deep Sense of the Excellencies of God upon his Heart, will make a God of nothing besides. He will give every One his just Encomium, Honour where Honour is due, and as much as is due; because it is his Duty to do so: But the Honour of God will suffer him to go no farther. Which Rule, if it had been observ'd, a Neighbouring Prince, (who now, God be thanked, needs Flattery somewhat more than ever he did) would have wanted a great deal of that Incense which



*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

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which hath been offered up to him by **S E R M.**  
his Adorers.



Upon these Grounds doth the Duty of Praise stand, and these are the Obligations that bind us to the Performance of it. 'Tis the End of our Being, and the very Rule and Law of Our Nature; flowing from the Two great Fountains of humane Action, the Understanding and the Will, naturally, and almost necessarily. It is the most Excellent Part of our Religious Worship; enduring to Eternity, after the rest shall be *done away*; and paid even Now, in the frankest manner, with the least Regard to our own Interest. It recommends it self to us by several peculiar Properties, and Advantages; as it carries more Pleasure in it, than all other Kinds of Devotion; as it enlarges and exalts the several Powers of the Mind; as it breeds in us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and a Willingness to promote it in the World: as it teaches us to be Humble and Lowly Our selves; and yet preserves us from base and sordid Flattery,

SERM. tery, from bestowing means and undue  
 I. Praises upon Others.

IV. I shall now shut up the Arguing Part of this Discourse, with a short Application to Two sorts of Persons; the *Careless*, and the *Profane*; One of which Neglects the Practice of so Important a Duty, the Other lives in an open Defiance of it.

A Neglect in this Case, doth certainly involve in it a very high Degree of Guilt and Folly: For 'tis (we see) the Neglect of our Duty, and Honour, our Interest, and our Pleasure, all at once. 'Tis to omit doing that, which we were purposely sent into the World to do; and without doing which, all the other Affairs of Life are but one continued Impertinence: That, which we have so many Obligations to do, and no Excuse for leaving undone; since Praise is within every Man's Reach; there is no one but hath it in his Power, to be Thankful.

God commanded the *Jews* to acknowledge his Sovereignty and Beneficence, by Sacrifices;

## Praise and Thanksgiving.

29

Sacrifices; a Costly and a Troublesome way of Worship. Of Us he requires only the Cheap and Easy Offering of Our Thanks and Praises---- and shall we not pay it? Alas! we do not! Every thing proves an hindrance to us in the way to this our Bounden Duty and Service: We are too idle, or too busy to attend upon it. And even when we find Leisure enough; yet how cold and how insensible are we, whilst 'tis going forward! *We draw nigh unto him with our Mouths, and Honour him with our Lips* (perhaps); *but our Hearts are far from him.* And do we then know, what it is to praise God becomingly? Do we remember, how the great Teacher of Thanksgiving summons up every One of his Faculties to assist him in it? *Bless the Lord, O my Soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy Name!* 'Tis a Work that will employ *all that is within us*, will call for all the Application, and Vigour, and Warmth, that we can possibly bestow upon it. Cold and languid Praise, is no Praise; this Sacrifice can be no longer acceptable than 'tis burning.

SERMON  
I.

Matt. xv.  
8.

Pf. ciii. 1.

To



To those Men, who live in the Contempt of this Duty, we have also somewhat to say, if they would but hear us. They are generally such, as pretend a high Sense of the Dignity of humane Nature, and bear no small Respect to their own Understandings. Now, though Other Parts of Religious Worship should happen to be too mean and low for such great Minds to take up with; yet This, methinks, might deserve to be thought Equal to them. Let Confession and Prayer go only for the Arts of Whining and Begging, and be as much beneath them as they imagine; yet, surely, Praise hath somewhat in it so great, and so noble, as may invite them to practise it. It is a Subject, fit for the most enlarg'd Capacities to dwell on; and such an one, as even Those would certainly find themselves rais'd and improv'd by.

If it were possible for These Men to have a Relish of any thing in this Kind, we would desire them to make the Tryal; to take the Hymn, call'd *Te Deum*, into their

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

31

SERMON

I.

their Hands, and to read it attentively; and then tell us truly, whether they did not find their Minds fill'd, and their Affections strangely rais'd by the Images which there occur'd to them; Whether they did not perceive themselves to be somewhat above themselves, whilst they were perusing it. And these Effects, of which every Man, who joins in that Hymn, must be sensible, are owing to that Majestick Plainness and Simplicity of Thought which goes through it, Unadorn'd by Words, Unenliven'd by Figures! 'Tis the Matter alone which supports the Expression: And because the Matter therein contain'd, is, the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, the pure and genuine Objects of Praise; therefore is the Hymn itself so lofty, and moving.

But, alas! we speak in vain! The Men, who are bold enough to slight a Duty of this Rank and Character, will easily slight every thing that can be offer'd to bring them to it. All we can say to them is, that, as God made them for his Glory, so he will certainly

SERM. ly serve the Ends of that Glory upon  
 I. them, one way, or another. And there-  
 fore, if they will not freely Praise him  
 for his Goodness in this World, they  
 shall surely, whether they will or no,  
 contribute to the Praise of his Justice in  
 the next.

V. Thus have I attempted to De-  
 scribe this Duty, to set out the great  
*Reasonableness*, and to stir You up to  
 the *Practice* of it. And certainly, it  
 was never more reasonable, than on This  
 Occasion, when we commemorate such  
 Past, and feel such Present Mercies. The  
 Restoration of the Monarchy, and of  
 all those Blessings in Church and State  
 that came back with it; the Re-esta-  
 blishment of *the Beauty of Praise* in our  
 Sanctuary; the Return of Peace and  
 Plenty, of Learning, and all the Arts  
 of Civil Life; the Reducing us from  
 Confusion and Rage into Order and  
 Friendliness, and making Us a Nation  
 at Unity in it self; Lovely at home,  
 and Terrible abroad. These were such  
 found and substantial Blessings as will

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*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

33

wear well; and, though done a great while ago, will yet deserve a great while  
ence a Place in our Kalendars. Nei-

ther Love to our Country, nor the Honour we bear to Those who rule over Us; neither Our Gratitude to God, nor our Good-will towards Men, will suffer such Wonders of Providence to slip out of our Minds; or the Day, in which they were brought about, easily to grow Old upon Us.

The Benefits, we then receiv'd, were indeed exceeding great, and would just-claim a larger Share in our present reflections, had not the Goodness of God taken off our Thoughts a little from that Subject, by calling us to the acknowledgment of New Loving Kindnesses. For, behold, what Glorious things the Lord hath again wrought for us! Blessing Their Majesties Forces with great and signal Victory over the most mighty and insolent of Enemies: A Victory so Early, so Compleat, and so cheaply purchas'd, that we have some reason to hope, it may fix the Fortune of the War, and put an End to the De-

VOL. I. D structions

SERM.

I.

Job

xxxviii.

II.

structions of the Destroyer; to whom we trust, God hath now said, as to the Sea it self, --- *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and Here shall thy proud Waves be stay'd.*

Blessed be God, who did not utterly cast out our Prayers, and our Supplications; but delay'd only to answer them till a *Day of Salvation*, till an *acceptable Time*, when the Mercy would be dearer to Us, and his Goodness more remarkably seen in bestowing it! When we were alarm'd with Invasions from abroad and Conspiracies at home; when Men threatned to *swallow us up quick*; when Success was now so requisite to preserve the Honour of the Nation, to support their Majesties Throne, and to strengthen the Hands of Their Allies: Then did he appear, and own Our Cause; Then was the God of Hosts our Strength, and our Shield. Surely, *There is no End of thy Goodness*, which continues thus to pursue us; which vouchsafes to establish Us, and to our Posterity, those Blessings under, which we have been so unthankful and so ingrateful already! and to give

## *Praise and Thanksgiving.*

us fresh Opportunities of Praise, which I hope we shall make a better Use of!

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I.

Let us, therefore, Offer unto God Thanksgiving; and not That only, but Our selves also, our Souls and Bodies, to be a Reasonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice: Let us tender him the Fruit of our Lips, and the Obedience of our Lives, that these Blessings may not prove a Curse to us; but that He may still be Our God, and We may be his People:

To Him, with the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Praise and Glory, henceforth, and for evermore!  
Amen.



B 2

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Two of the following

John D. ...

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in two columns. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list includes names such as "John Smith", "Mary Jones", and "Robert Brown", along with their respective addresses in various cities and states.

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This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor creases and discoloration, characteristic of old paper. The left edge of the page shows the binding of the book, and the overall tone is a warm, off-white or light beige.

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*The POWER of Charity to Cover Sin.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

PRESIDENT and GOVERNORS

Of the HOSPITALS of

*Bridewell and Bethlehem,*

IN

BRIDEWELL-CHAPEL,

*August 16. 1694.*

---

I St. PETER iv. 8.

*Charity shall Cover the multitude of Sins.*

W E be thanked, the frequent Re-SERM.

I turns of such Pious Meetings as  
 e, in this Rich and Charitable CITY,  
 ve made the General Argument of

D 3

CHA-

SERM.

II.



CHARITY, the Nature and Chief Properties, the several Grounds and Reasons of this Duty so well understood, that to Entertain You with a Discourse as large on that Subject, would be a very needless and useless Attempt. So many Eminent Pens have gone before, in This Way, as have left it very difficult for those who come after, either to say anything, which They *have not* said, or not to say That much worse, which They *have*.

Upon This Account; and because, indeed, I take General Discourses, for the most part, to be like Large Prospects where the Eye is lost by the wide Compass it takes, and sees so many things at once, that it sees nothing distinctly. I have chosen at present to point Your Thoughts only on One Particular Property of this Great Virtue, which has been not often handled, I think; and even Then, not always well understood. It is That, which the Apostle St. Peter proposeth to Us, in those few Words have read to You --- *Charity shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.*



Few as they are, they will sufficiently employ our Thoughts at this time, if we consider, in the

*First* place, the several Explications that have been given of them, and satisfy our selves, which of These ought to take place. If, I.

*Secondly*, We free That One True Genuine Meaning of the Words from the Exceptions which lie against it. If, II.

*Thirdly*, We establish the Truth laid down upon its Proper Grounds and Reasons. And if, III.

*Fourthly*, We make some few useful Deductions from it. IV.

After this is done, the little Time that is left, will properly be spent in Applying what hath been said more immediately to the Occasion of This Present Assembly. V.

*Charity shall Cover the multitude of Sins.* I.

There is scarce any Man, I believe, who hears these Words, that is not ready to frame to himself This Sense of them; " That the Virtue of *Charity*

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II.



“ is of so great price in the Sight of  
 “ God, that Those Persons, who possess  
 “ and exercise it in any Eminent man-  
 “ ner, are peculiarly Entitled to the  
 “ Divine Favour and Pardon, with re-  
 “ gard to numberless Slips and Fail-  
 “ ings in their Duty, which they  
 “ may be Otherwise guilty of: this  
 “ Great Christian Perfection, of which  
 “ they are Masters, shall make many  
 “ Little Imperfections to be over-look’d  
 “ and unobserv’d; it shall *Cover the*  
 “ *multitude of Sins.*

This, I say, is the account, which every Man naturally gives himself of these Words, at his first hearing them; and it is for That very Reason probable, that This is the True and Genuine account of them. For, supposing the Original Text to be well and clearly render’d in our Version, it will, I am of opinion, be found, that That Sense of any Passage, which, after attending to the Force of the Words, and to their Coherence with what goes before, and what follows, First occurs to the Mind, is generally the Justest and Truest.

This

This hath not however been always thought a Good Rule in the present Case. For several Pious, and some Judicious Men, finding the Words, in their plain and familiar meaning, to carry somewhat of a suspicious sound with them, and to border a little (as They Thought) on the Papal Doctrine of *Works Meritorious*, have, therefore, taken some Pains to give a Different Interpretation of them. I shall offer, first, to your view some of these mistaken Senses, e'er I come to consider That which, I think, was intended by St. *Peter*; because Each of these doth certainly propose a Clear and Apposite Truth to us, tho' perhaps not truly drawn from the Passage now before us.

*First*, then, the Words have been understood to contain an account of that particular Instance of Charity, which we call *Good-Nature*: by which we pass by little Sights and Injuries, interpret things in the Best sense, are not apt to take, or return an Affront, not forward to publish, or believe an ill Report of  
any



SERM.  
II.

any One: by which we turn our Eyes always towards the Best side of a Man, and chuse rather to look on his Virtues, than his Failures; and by which we constantly interpose our Good Offices, where-ever, we think, they may be Serviceable, either to the composing Old Differences, or preventing New ones.

And This Sense is grounded upon a suppos'd Relation there is between These Words in St. Peter, and Those in the *Proverbs*; *Hate stirreth up Strifes, but Love covereth all Sins*. Now, tho' indeed, in *Our Translation*, there is some Similitude between the Words of the Text, and this Passage in the *Proverbs*; yet, as it lies in the *Septuagint-Version* (which the Apostles made use of), it bears no such Resemblance to the Text as may make it probable that the One ought to be Expounded by the Other. On the Contrary it deserves observation,

\* Καλύπτειν ἡμᾶς-  
τίας.

† See Ps. lxxxiv. 1.  
Ps. xxxii. 1. and Nehem. iv. 5.

that, where-ever the Greek Phrase\*, which is here translated by *Covering Sin*, occurs in Scripture, it constantly signifies that Pardon of Sin which proceeds from God, not any Instances of Good Nature

Nature and Forgiveness exercised by **SERM.**  
Men. **II.**

We may farther observe, that This Sense of the Words is by no means full enough to bear the Weight of that emphatic and solemn Preface with which the Apostle introduces them : *but above all things* (says He, in the Words immediately before the Text) *have fervent Charity among your selves : for Charity shall Cover the multitude of Sins.* 'Εὐτενὴ ἀγάπῃ, intense, or fervent Charity must signify somewhat more than the bare Acts and Offices of *Good-Nature*. If they, to whom the Apostle wrote, were *above all things* to have *fervent Charity* among themselves, it could not be for This Reason, because Charity would render them inoffensive towards Others, and not easy to be offended Themselves. For though This be a commendable Degree of Virtue, and very fit to be enjoined, because not frequently practis'd ; yet can it not deserve that peculiar Emphasis and Stress which is here laid upon it. Especially, if we consider it as succeeding the mention of those more important  
and

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II.



and necessary Duties, to which the Apostle exhorts them in the preceeding Verse, the *being sober, and watching unto Prayer*: Above all which, it cannot be suppos'd, that the Duty of conversing with one another according to the Rules of *Good-Nature* and *Gentleness* should be enjoin'd.

The Words, therefore, have, in the *Second* place, been thus also interpreted. *Charity shall Cover the multitude of Sins*, that is, says the excellent *Grotius*, it will have a mighty Influence towards reclaiming Sinners from the Errour of their Ways; the Consequence of which is, That the Sins of Men thus reclaim'd, are pardon'd, or cover'd. Charity, which is an exalted Love of God and our Neighbour, will make us industrious in procuring Glory to the One, by the Salvation of the Other. It will create a mighty Zeal for the Interests of Virtue, and the Honour of the Gospel, and the Good of our Souls; and it will run through all the Difficulties that lie in the way towards so good an End, with Readiness and Pleasure. It will



will not be frightened from making Attempts even on Those of the first Rank in Wickedness, the Worst and most Hardned of Men; because it knows, that *Their* Revolt from Sin to Virtue (if it can be compass'd) will be of mighty Consequence to Religion, and will probably draw whole Troops of Common Sinners along with it: The Sense they have of their Own Sins being cover'd, will make *Them* also eager, in their turn, to cover those of Other Men.

This is a very Good and Pious Sense of the Words, but (I believe, it will be allow'd me) no very Easy and Natural One: they must be rack'd e'er they can be brought to confess This Meaning. However, it was what that Learned Person was led into by a former Explication he had made of a Parallel place in St. *James*; which I shall crave leave to produce at length, and to comment upon, because I take it to be the *Key* of the Text, which easily and readily lets us into the True sense of it. *Brethren* (says St. *James*, at the Conclusion of his Epistle) *if any One of* <sup>James vi  
19, 20.</sup>  
*You*

SERM. *You do Err from the Truth, and One*

II.

*Convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a Sinner from the Errour of his Ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins.* He intended to shut up his Epistle with recommending to them One of the most important and useful Virtues, That of endeavouring the Conversion and Reformation of Men. And he intended also to stir them up to the Exercise of this Virtue by the most powerful Motives he could propose: What are they? Why, first, That *He who converteth a Sinner from the Errour of his ways, should consider, that he saveth a Soul from Death,* and then, secondly, and chiefly, That *he shall [also] cover a multitude of Sins.* Whose Sins? Those of the Converted Person? Nay, but That was already said, and much more than that in the foregoing Motive, *He shall save a Soul from Death:* for surely the saving a Soul from Death, necessarily includes and presupposes the Remission of its Sins. It must then be meant of His Sins who makes, and not of His who becomes,

the



the Convert : And Thus indeed this Last Clause carries a New Motive in it, distinct from That in the Former; and such an One as riseth beyond it, and more sensibly toucheth those to whom it is address'd; and was therefore fit to be propos'd in the Last place, and to be left, as a Sting, in their Minds. 'Tis as if St. *James* had said more at length, "Let such an one know, that He shall, by This Means, not *only* save a Soul from Death, (though This it self be a very Great and Desirable Thing) but shall *also* (which more nearly concerns him) secure to himself on this account the Pardon of many Sins.

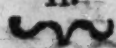
Now the Words of St. *James* here explain'd, are exactly the same with those of St. *Peter*, in my Text; and the Occasion upon which they are introduced, and their dependance on the Context is much the same in both Places; except only that they are used in my Text as a Motive to Charity in general, but in St. *James*, with regard only to One main and eminent Branch of it, the Conversion of Souls : What therefore

St.



SERM. St. James means by them, is meant also

II.



by St. Peter : and, consequently, that most Obvious and Easy Sense, which I mention'd at the Entrance of this Discourse, is, in all probability, the Truest. And, as such, I shall take the liberty here once again to repeat it. It is This, " That the Virtue of Charity is of so great price in the sight of God, that " They, who possess and exercise it in any Eminent Manner, are peculiarly " entitled to the Divine Favour and Pardon, with regard to numberless Slips " and Failings in their Duty, which they " may be Otherwise guilty of. This " great Christian Perfection, of which " they are Masters, shall make many " little Imperfections to be over-look'd " and unobserv'd ; It shall Cover the " multitude of Sins.

Nor are there wanting Parallel Places in other parts of Holy Writ, which confirm this Interpretation of the Words, and the Doctrine contain'd in it. For besides those Passages in the Apocryphal

Tobxii.9. Writers, which directly affirm that *Alms shall purge away Sin*, and that *As Water*

Ecclus.  
iii. 30.

*quencheth*

*Praise and Thanksgiving.*

49

*quencheth Flaming Fire, so Alms ma-* SERM.  
*eth an Atonement for Sins; there are in* II.

the Books of *Proverbs*, and *Daniel*, two  
texts, very exprefs to this purpose: In  
the first of these the *Wise Man* declares, *Prov. xvi.*  
that *by Mercy and Truth Iniquity is pur-* 6.

*ged*; and in the Latter the Prophet coun-  
sels *Nebuchadnezzar*, to *break off his* Dan. iv.  
*Sins by Righteousness*, (or rather, as it 27.

in all the Ancient Versions, to redeem  
his Sins by Alms-deeds) and his *Iniqui-*  
*ties by shewing Mercy to the Poor*. And  
were it proper in this place to vouch the  
testimony of the Earliest Writers of the  
Church, it were easy to produce, from  
their Works, Passages without Number,  
wherein they speak the same Language.

I fear I have been tedious in settling  
the *Sense of the Words*: but it is no  
more than was requisite, in so important  
Point, so little insisted on from the Pul-  
pit; and which may be thought liable to  
me Just *Exceptions*.

*These* I am now, in the *Second Place*, II.  
propose, and shall endeavour to re-  
move. The doing of which will give  
Vol. I. E me

SERM.

II.



me an Occasion of clearing the Sense, and limiting the Bounds of this Truth more exactly and fully.

The *First* and Great Exception against This way of Expounding the Text is that it gives too great a Colour to the Popish Doctrines of *Merit* and *Supererogation*; and seems to lessen the Worth of that only True and Proper Satisfaction for Sin, made by our Saviour on the Cross. For, at This Rate, what need of Remission of Sin in Every Case by the Blood of Christ, since We ourselves are in Good Measure capable of making the Atonement? We who have it, it seems, in our power, by the Exercise of one Particular Virtue to secure a Pardon to our selves for Neglecting all the Rest; and can blot out the Remembrance of an Ill-spent Life, by a few Acts of Charity at the Close of it? As if God were so much beholden to us for our Good Deeds, as to be bound, for Their Sakes, to forgive us our Ill Ones! Or, as if the Performance of Our Duty in One Case, could make a

mann



manner of Amends to Him for our Non-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
performance of it in Another! This, say <sup>II.</sup>  
They, is very Easy and Comfortable  
Divinity!

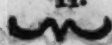
To take off the Force of This Objec-  
tion, it will be requisite to reflect a lit-  
tle on these following Considerations.  
And,

1<sup>st</sup>, We must Explain our selves a  
little more particularly, What is to be  
understood by that *Charity*, to which  
the Promise of the Text is made; What  
it is in the *Nature* and *Extent*, and what  
in the *Intention* and *Degree* of it.

As to its *Nature* and *Extent*, it must  
be understood to signify not barely *Acts*  
of *Relief* to the Poor and Needy, as the  
Vulgar and Confin'd Use of the Word  
imports; but, more largely, all the seve-  
ral ways of *Universal Beneficence* and  
*Kindness*, by which one Man can be ser-  
viceable to another. Farther, it expres-  
ses not the *Outward Material Act* only,  
but must be suppos'd to take in also the  
*Vital Form* of it, that *Inward Principle*  
of a *Sincere Love* towards God and Man,  
from whence it regularly flows; and

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II.



separated from which, the meer external Act is a Lifeless and Useless Performance. And Then, even of Charity thus Largely understood, it is *not a common Degree* that is meant here; 'Tis to an Intense or Fervent Charity, to a mighty and extraordinary measure of it, that this mighty and extraordinary Blessing is expressly said to belong.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Even of this Exalted Degree of Charity it is not said, *that it shall cover all manner of Transgressions*, how Gross and Heinous soever; The Words of the Text do by no means carry us to assert thus much concerning it: but only (as You have heard them Explain'd to You) seem to say, that it shall be our Excuse for many lesser Neglects and Failings in our Duty, many Sins of Infirmary, Surprize, and Daily Incurfion, which are properly enough styl'd *multitude of Sins*: It shall Cover such Offences only, as are consistent with the state of True Charity: and surely That cannot be very Gross and Presumptuous. For He, who lives in the Perfect Exercise of that Fervent Charity, which

Text recommends, abounding Inwardly and Outwardly in all the various Instances and Expressions of it, and in those several Virtues and Graces which do naturally attend it: I say, whoever he is, that is thoroughly possess'd and acted by this Divine Principle of *Love*, cannot be suppos'd capable of committing any Heinous Sins, *whilst* he is under the Guidance of it: And as for Those, which he had fallen into *before* the attainment of this Gift, They were certainly remitted also and cover'd, *before* the attainment of it; else, doubtless, he had never attain'd it. So that no Great Guilt of any kind can well be thought to harbour in that Breast, where true Charity dwells.

Indeed, it is not universally certain, that, whenever God remits the *Guilt* of Sin, he remits the Punishment too (the *Temporal Punishment*, I mean): for Wicked Men, upon their Return to Virtue, do not seldom find, to their Cost, that a Sin may be pardon'd, and yet all the Ill Consequences of it not prevented; and they can, therefore, often trace the Steps

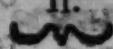


SERM.

II.

of their Former Misdoings, in the several Evils of Life that afterward befall them. And in This Sense, therefore, it may be, and is probably true, that Charity shall cover many Sins, even of the first Magnitude; *i. e.* it shall prevent the Temporal Inflictions due to them, and often, even after Pardon obtain'd, pursuing the Committers of them: But it contributes to a removal of the *Guilt* only of such Frailties and Infirmities of a lesser size, as may be thought consistent with a state of Charity. And therefore, to except against the Doctrine laid down, as encouraging the Charitable Man to expect Remission of all manner of Sins, how great and how numerous soever, is to load it with a Difficulty which doth no ways belong to it. But,

3<sup>dly</sup>, Even as to these slighter Omissions and Failings, it is not pretended, that they are cover'd by Acts of Mercy and Charity in any sense, but what includes the Application of the Merits of our Saviour's Blood, the only Fountain of Satisfaction for all Kind of Sins, for



the Least as well as the Greatest. It is true indeed, and granted, that the Blood of Christ alone can expiate Sin: However, this hinders not but that God may make such and such Acts of Ours the *Conditions* and Grounds (as it were) of applying the Virtue of that Blood to us. And thus Our Good Works, tho' they are not the *Meritorious*, yet may become, if I may so speak, the *Occasional* Cause of Pardon and Grace to us. And if This be establishing the Popish Doctrine of Salvation by Works, then hath our Saviour Himself, I fear, established it, in that Divine Form of Prayer, in which he hath taught us to say, *Forgive Us Our Trespases, as We forgive Those that Trespase against Us. As We forgive Those! i. e. Inasmuch as, on That very account (among Others) because, we forgive Those that trespass against Us.* Where, we see, the Exercise of one great Instance of Charity, Forgiveness of Enemies, is made the Ground of our asking and expecting Forgiveness from God.

SERM.  
II.

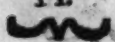
*athly* and *Lastly*, It follows not, that because so Vast a Recompence is promis'd to a Fervent Charity, therefore the Exercise of it is in the way of *Supererogation*, so that we might have let it alone without Fault or Blame. We may be strictly, and by the very Letter of the Law, oblig'd to it; and yet it may include so high a pitch of perfection, and one so seldom attain'd, that God may think fit, where-ever it is attain'd, mightily to reward it; and to encourage us towards doing our Duty in some Other Great Point, by an assurance, that in many smaller Instances he will not be *Extream to mark what is done amiss* by us. Our Gracious Master deals with Us in This Case, as a Man oftentimes doth with his Servant; If he be Trusty and Faithful to him in a Business of Great Concern and Moment, tho' his Duty bound him to be so, yet shall that piece of Excellent Service excuse many Neglects and Failings upon Other Occasions. There is yet a *Second Objection*, tho' indeed so slight an One, as, after the Former hath been remov'd, is scarce worth mentioning.



mentioning. It is taken from that Say-  
 ing of our Lord, That They *will* Love  
 much, to whom much *hath been* forgiven.

Contrary to which, the Text, as here ex-  
 pounded, seems to affirm, that They  
 who *do* love much, *shall* have much For-  
 given them. But these two Truths are  
 easily reconcil'd. For it is not hard to  
 understand, how That, which is the *Cause*  
 of a thing in One Respect, may be the  
*Effect* of it in another. And, according-  
 ly, it may be very true, that He, who is  
 Forgiven much, will, for that very rea-  
 son, Love much: And it may be as  
 True, that He, who thus Loveth much,  
 because much hath been Forgiven him,  
 shall, on that very account, have much  
 more Forgiven him. 'Tis just the same  
 Case as between Me and my Friend: I  
 may passionately love him, because he  
 hath pardon'd me the Great and many  
 Injuries I formerly did him, while we  
 were at Variance: And again, the Know-  
 ledge he hath of my Love, may incline  
 him to pass over any Future Mistakes  
 and Miscarriages, whereby I may hap-  
 pen to offend him.

The



The Doctrine being thus fix'd, and freed from Exception; I go on, as I propos'd, in the *Third* place, to enquire into the *Grounds and Reasons* of this Wondrous Efficacy, so particularly attributed to the Exercise of Charity: for we read not that God hath annex'd this Promise to any Other Grace, or Virtue of the Christian Life whatsoever, but to This only, that it *shall cover Sin*; of which these several Accounts may, with some Probability, be given.

1<sup>st</sup>, That it was really more fit and proper that such a Return as this should be made to Charity, than to any Other Virtue; because it adjusts and proportions the Reward of Acting to the Act itself; and makes the Duty of Man towards God, and the Blessing of God upon the Performance of That Duty, to have a near Relation and Resemblance to Each other. I explain my self in this manner: The Chief Employment, the highest Point and Perfection of Charity is, to pass by the Offences and Injuries of Men; to pardon the Malice of our Enemies, and the

the Ingratitude of our Friends. To Him <sup>SERMON</sup>  
 therefore, who advances to this Height of <sup>II.</sup>  
 Virtue, God hath very *aply* and *suitably*  
 promis'd, that His Faults and Offences  
 shall be pardon'd: as he deals with  
 his Neighbour, so will God deal with  
 him: Mercy shall be shew'd upon him,  
 who shews Mercy: if we forgive Other  
 Men Their Trespases, then will our  
 Heavenly Father forgive Us Our Tref-  
 passes also. There is, You see, a strict  
 Analogy betwixt the Reward annex'd,  
 and one Great Instance of the Virtue en-  
 joy'd: which is God's Method of put-  
 ting us in Mind of what we are to Do,  
 by his Promises, as well as his Commands;  
 and of exciting Us to endeavour after a  
 Perfection, not easily attain'd, by assu-  
 ring Us, that the Exercise of it shall, in  
 the very same kind, return doubly and  
 trebly into our Own Bosom. But,  
 2dly, The Good and Charitable Man  
 is peculiarly entit'led to the Pardon of  
 many Sins, because he is in a peculiar  
 manner liable to incur the Guilt of ma-  
 ny; either from the *Natural Frame and*  
*Make* of his Mind, which disposes him  
 to



SERM. to this Virtue, or from the very Exercise  
II. of the Virtue it self.

Charity is grafted always on Good Nature, and a Sweetness of Disposition which though it be a Temper of Mind very lovely and desirable; yet is it such as, in the Circumstances of our present Imperfect State, hath its Inconveniences; and is what makes Conversation dangerous in a World, where we are surrounded with Temptations. It hinders us from arming our selves with that obstinate Resolution of Mind, that stubborn in complying Virtue, which is requisite to preserve a Man undefil'd and blameless. It makes us easy and yielding to Common Customs, and Receiv'd Opinions; Ready to comply with a Thousand things (of which we are not exactly well satisfied) upon the pure score of good Nature, and because we cannot allow our selves to be troublesome. And being found and known to be of this Easy and Complying Temper; this very thing will invite Ill Spirits, and Ill Men, to make their Attempts upon us.

And

And then the \* *Exercise* of the Virtue SERM.  
II.  
self, especially where the Principle of it

strong, lays us open to several Failings. It makes us omit oftentimes the Duties incumbent on us from our Professions and Callings; and perhaps neglect to take care of Those, whom it is the First point of Charity to take care of, our Children and Families. It warms us with such a Zeal for doing Good, as breaks out sometimes into Acts, not reconcileable to the Rules of Discretion, Decency, and Right Reason; and which do real disservice to the Cause of God and Religion, instead of promoting it. St. Francis's Charity went a little too far, when it was taken up in providing for Birds, and beasts, after a most Extraordinary and singular manner: the Virtue was not at all beholden to him for being shew'd in such a Dress, as, instead of rendring it desirable in the Eyes of Men, made it look ridiculous.

\* Ἀγαπᾷ ζῷα (τὸ ὅτι τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸν τῷ ἀγαπᾷ)  
αὐτὸν γέγονεν αὐτὸν κακῶν, τοῖς ἐν οὐρανῷ χερσα-  
ίοις αὐτῇ. Chrylost. de Sacerdot. p. 250. Ed. Cant.

Indeed

SERM.

II.

Indeed Love (the Spring-Head of Charity) as it is the sweetest of All Passions so is one of the strongest too; and, if we have the Reins but once given to it, will go near to run away with its Rider: that is, if a due Care be not taken of it, it will exalt our Fancy so high, and disorder it so much, as to put it out of the Reach and Rule of the Governing Powers of the Mind. And then, what wild Works doth there follow! Instead of Wise and Rational Ways of Beneficence, foolish Undertakings and impracticable Designs. Instead of a manly and sober Form of Devotion, all the extravagant Rants and silly Freaks of Enthusiasm! For the Proof of which I appeal to the Lives of many of those Saints to whom the Church of *Rome* hath allow'd a place in her Calendar!

Finally, the Charitable Man, who Loves every thing, doth not fail sometimes to love his Own Virtue too; I mean, that he is apt to over-rate the just Price of it, and too much to undervalue every thing else in comparison of it. A Man may be so much struck with the Beauty and

Excellence



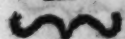
Excellence of Charity, as to be less con-  
cern'd than he ought to be for a sound  
*Faith*, and make Shipwrack of the One,  
whilst he is too hastily and zealously pur-  
suing the Other.

Thus, I say, the Good and Merciful  
Man, being particularly liable to some  
Infirmities, is as particularly comforted  
with a Gracious Assurance of their Par-  
don.

3<sup>dly</sup>, God seems on purpose to have  
plac'd this Mark of Distinction upon  
Charity, to shew us, how tender and  
careful He is of *Our* Welfare; what  
Bowels of Love and Compassion he hath  
for Us: Since That is His Favourite  
Virtue, the Virtue he chiefly delights in,  
and delights to reward; the Exercise of  
which is most sweet and comfortable,  
most useful and advantageous to the Sons  
of Men. He design'd, by This Convin-  
cing Instance of his Goodness, to prove  
to us, that he was not an hard and rigo-  
rous Master, who enjoin'd us Commands,  
for his *Own* sake, and purely for the plea-  
sure of being Obey'd; but that his great  
Intention was, to twist our Duty and  
our

SERM.

II.



our Happiness together: And therefore, the more our Ease and Advantage was concern'd in the Practice of any Virtue, the stronger Ties and Engagements to it was he resolv'd to lay upon us.

4thly, Charity is particularly available to procure a Remission of the Guilt of Sin, and a Relaxation of the Punishment due to it; because it particularly engages in our behalf the Prayers of all Good Men, and of all Those Persons to whom the Instances of our Goodness extend. A Kind and Beneficent Man, as He is a Common Blessing to the World, so is He blest'd by all Mankind that know him: All are ready to Implore the Mercies of God, Spiritual and Temporal, upon the Merciful-minded; especially the Poor and Miserable, (whose Prayers God hath in a particular manner promis'd to hear) are constant and earnest Intercessors at the Throne of Grace for him. So that, whereas the Possessors of Other Virtues stand chiefly upon their Own Bottom for the obtaining Pardon and Grace, Every man almost becomes a Suppliant for the Merciful and Liberal: and no wonder, therefore

therefore, if such United Requests prevail. But, *5thly*, and principally, God hath made This Promise to *Charity*, and to no Other Virtue, because it is really the chief and most Excellent of Virtues; and the most Excellent Thing ought to have the most Excellent Reward. It is the great Perfection, the distinguishing Grace of a Christian, preferable to Faith and Hope, in Dignity, in Use, and in the Length of its Duration, as *St. Paul* hath taught us to reason concerning it. It is call'd the *Great Commandment* †, the *End of the* † *Matth.*  
*Commandment* \*, and the *Fulfilling of the* \* *xxii. 38*  
*Law* †: and it is really what it is call'd. † *I Tim.*  
For where This Divine Grace dwells, and † *ii. 5.*  
reigns, there no Moral Attainment of any † *Rom.*  
kind can be totally wanting. *Charity* is † *xiii. 10.*  
the Queen of Virtues \*, the Rest are of \* *Βασιλις*  
Her Retinue, and Train, as it were; con- \* *ἡ ἀρε-*  
stantly attending on Her, appearing, and *των.*  
disappearing with Her: and well, there- *Chrys.*  
fore, as a Queen, is she invested by God *T. VI.*  
with that Sovereign Prerogative, the *p. 193.*  
power of Covering Sin. It is Her Na-  
ture to be comprehensive of, and abound-

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ing



SERMON  
II.

ing in many Duties; and, therefore, it is Her Reward also, to be a Skreen for many Failings. Charity is said in Scripture to establish a True Friendship, and to create a Real Likeness between God and Man: God passeth by the Faults, therefore, of the Charitable, as a Friend doth those of his Friend; the Great Resemblance of the Divine Nature, which shines out in him, hides every Lesser Short and Degree of Unlikeness, and makes it not to be discern'd.

'Tis difficult to stop on so Fruitful a Subject; and yet more difficult to express one's self becomingly and well. The Tongues of Men and Angels, as they are said to be a worthless Gift, in comparison of Charity, so are they not All able to set out Half the Worth and Excellency of it. St. Paul hath done somewhat towards it, in the XIIIth Chapter of the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and Him I refer You.

IV.

It remains, that I should make those few *Inferences* I intended from the Whole, and then point all that hath been said

particularly upon the Occasion of this SERM.  
Present Assembly. And, II.

1<sup>st</sup>, The Truth, which hath been explain'd, suggests to us One Argument against their Opinion, who hold *Justification*, and all the Graces of the Gospel to be convey'd to us by *Faith alone*; in such a sense as excludes any manner of Regard to our *Works*. For if Justification be The putting a Man into a state of Favour with God by Remission of Sin, then Works of Charity which contribute to the Remission of our Sins, must contribute also to our Justification. This Point goes generally for a *Speculative Nicety*, not worth insisting upon: But surely They, who think so, have not well considered, what Influence it hath experimentally had upon *Prudence* and a Good Life, in many of its Assertions. Some Spiritual Libertines, of the *Anomian* Way, have by it undermined the very Design of the Gospel; and set us free from the Necessity of being Pious, just, or Good, upon any other Principle, but that of pure *Gratitude* only. And in those who do not rise to these mad heights, yet the Perswasions They have

SERM.

I.  
W

entertain'd about Justifying Faith, are observ'd mightily to lessen their Esteem of Good Works: and from esteeming them less, to come to practise them less, is, God knows, a very Easy step, and almost an unavoidable One! Witness the celebrated *Institutions* of a great Divine, in which *Faith* much every where, of *Charity* little any where is spoken; and we are not, therefore, to wonder, if the Rules of Charity should in that Book be as little observ'd. Indeed these very Rules of Charity (which I would not willingly, while I am mentioning, transgress) induce me to think, That many Learned and Pious Men hold this Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, in its most Rigid Sense, without holding, or even discerning the Ill Consequences that attend it. However, since the Ill Consequences of this Doctrine are sufficiently plain, both for Reason, and Experience, (tho' such Men happen not to perceive them) the same Rules of Charity forbid us, when the Subject falls in our way, to be silent concerning them, or suffer Men to think, that those, who



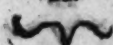
exclude good Works from being any ways Instrumental towards Justifying a Sinner, are guilty only of an Innocent Mistake, which reacheth no farther than bare Speculation. A

2<sup>d</sup> Inference is, That, if a Spirit of Charity shall cover a multitude of Sins; then may we assure our selves, that the contrary Temper, a Spirit of Hatred, Malignity, and Ill Will, shall cover a multitude of Virtues; *i. e.* They shall not be reckon'd as Virtues to Him who possesseth them; Neither God nor Man shall regard them as such, if Charity doth not Crown them. Charity covers many Sins, because it is so noble and so excellent a Virtue: what Virtue then, beyond this, can there be found, of Value sufficient to cover the Sin of Uncharitableness?

3<sup>dly</sup>, From the Promise made in the Text, We may take an occasion to reflect on the wondrous Goodness and Condescension of God. He hath a right to all the highest Instances and Degrees of Virtue that is possible for us to abound in; and when we have practis'd them to the utmost, we have done but what

SERM.

II



we were strictly oblig'd to do: And yet so far he is pleas'd to abate of this Right, as to accept the Performance of One Great Duty in lieu of the Omission of many Others. An Act of Grace and Kindness, which is enhans'd to Us, by considering, that Reason never did, or could make this known to the Heathen World; although the Gospel hath now reveal'd it to Us. Nay, remarkable it is (as I observ'd to you before) that this Great Duty, which is to compensate, as it were, for all our Failings, is the most pleasant and delightful Employment that belongs to us; the most agreeable to our Nature, and the most useful to our Fellow-Creatures. Let us not complain, therefore, of the strictness of the Rule we are to walk by, and of the Hardships, which in our Christian Warfare we are to undergo. The Rule is strict indeed; but then, as there are Great Helps and Assistances, enabling us to live up to it; so great Abatements and Allowances (we see) are made to us at last, if we do not. There are indeed Difficulties to be undergone: But, surely, the Labour of

SW

Love

Love is none of them. That, as it makes SERM.  
II.  
a kind of Attonement to God for all the

Faults we commit, so doth it make an A-  
mendments to US for all the Troubles we are at,  
in every other Part of our Duty; It gives  
an Easiness to that Yoke, and a Lightness  
that Burthen which is laid upon us.

ably and Lastly, If the Doctrine laid  
down be good, then have we in it the  
plainest and most quickning Motive in  
the World (to the Exercise of this great  
Duty of Charity; such a Motive, as ex-  
ceeds the United Force of all the Argu-  
ments which ever were offer'd in this  
Case; and of whose Power if a Man  
can be insensible, all Other Motives will  
doubtless be lost upon him. The wise  
Son of *Syrach* thought he had made a  
reasonable Plea for Charity, when he

said, *Lay up Thy Treasure according to the*  
*Commandments of the most High, and it*  
*shall bring Thee more Profit than Gold.*  
*Shut up Alms in thy Storehouses, and it*  
*shall deliver Thee from All Affliction; It*  
*shall fight for Thee against Thine Enemies*  
*better than a mighty Shield, or a strong Spear.*

*Ecclus.*  
*xxix. 11,*  
*12, 13.*

But how Flat, and Cold, and Unmoving is



SERM.

II.



all this when compar'd with the Life and Energy that is in those Few Words; *It shall Cover the multitude of Sins.*

This Motive indeed hath been carry'd too far, and abus'd to ill Purposes by Men of another Communion, who, by the help of it, have made the most Impure and Profligate Wretches hope for a General Forgiveness of all their Sins, so They were but Liberal enough to the Church in their Wills; and settled such a Revenue upon it, as should make a Good Number of Fathers think it worth their while to say Daily *Masses* for the Soul of the Departed. And how gross a way soever This is of Expounding the Text, it hath prov'd a very gainful one to those who made use of it; For perhaps half the Wealth of the Church of *Rome* may justly be attributed to it. A strong Perswasion of the Truth of this Exposition seems to have been one of the chief Foundation-stones, upon which a Great Part of Her Charitable Buildings have been Erected.

The Ministers of the Reform'd Church indeed, dare nor go so far in inviting

you

you to Works of Charity and Mercy; But This they dare, and do affirm; That a true Principle of Charity, is that Qualification of Mind, which of all others is most grateful and acceptable to God; and such as, at the Day of final Retribution, He will have a particular Regard to, so as to make no severe Scrutiny into that Man's Faults and Failings, who hath Eminently guided his Life and Practice by it. And this they think sufficiently intimated in our Saviour's Account of the Process of that Day; where the Only Head of Enquiry he mentions, is, what Good and Charitable Deeds we have done to any of our Poor Brethren? Which implies thus much at least; That This will be the Chief Point upon which we shall be examin'd; and that Our Acquittal, as to Neglects in Other Parts of Our Duty, will depend very much upon Our being able to give a good Answer to it.

And, I hope this Assurance it self is a sufficient Encouragement to the Practice of Charity, without Our needing to strain the Words of the Text to so Extravagant

SERM.  
II

we ought, and no Good Man would wish that we might, take them in.

V.

There is indeed no farther Sense of the Words, than hath yet been mention'd; to which they may, however, be innocently and truly extended. They have been hitherto consider'd only as containing a Particular Promise to Particular Persons: They may be understood also with regard to those Blessings which Publick Charities procure on Publick States and Communities. For it is true also, that Acts of Charity shall Cover the Sins of Cities and Kingdoms, as well as those of Private Men, if Cities and Kingdoms do generally agree to perform them.

Our Fore-fathers, we may presume, were of This Opinion; and were powerfully influenc'd by it, towards setting forward those Charitable Designs, which are a Lasting Honour and Advantage to this City and Kingdom. They could not but see, that the Wealth of the Church, tho' it was really grown too Great, and was by some Rich Lazy Orders in it scandalously



lously employ'd; yet had been retrench'd, **SERMON**  
on this Account, *beyond* what needed, and **II.**  
had not been apply'd afterwards to any  
Religious, or Publick Use: but was squan-  
der'd away for the most part upon Favou-  
rites, and upon such as fell in with the  
Honest Zeal of our first Reformers, not  
out of any Principle of Conscience, but the  
mere Design of enriching Themselves out  
of the Plunder of Abbies and Monastries.  
The Sense of this, doubtless, affected  
deeply the Good and Pious Men of those  
Times; and made them very Earnest and  
Active to procure some part of these  
*Church-Spoils* to be set aside for Charitable  
Uses: that Retribution, as it were, might,  
by this Means, be made to God, of what  
had been torn away in too Large Propor-  
tions from his Worship and Service: To  
speak plainly - that by a true Spirit of  
Charity those Sins might be *Cover'd*,  
which a Spirit of Lust and Avarice, un-  
der the pretence of Reforming the Abuses  
of Charity, had *caus'd*.  
And these Endeavours of theirs God  
bless'd so wonderfully, that some Milli-  
ons of Money were, in a few Years, con-  
tributed

SERM  
II.

tributed towards erecting and endowing  
 Here, and in other Parts of our Country  
 Hospitals and Houses of Charity. This  
 sufficiently baffled the Calumnies, and  
 stopp'd the Mouths of Our Adversaries of  
 the Church of *Rome*; who cry'd us down  
 as Men that were Reforming away Good  
 Works, and turning all Religion into a  
 Notional Faith. How Other Protestant  
 Countries have freed Themselves from  
 that Imputation, I am not able to say:  
 sure I am, Ours clear'd it self so well from  
 it, as to turn the Edge of the Objection  
 back upon the Church of *Rome* it self. For  
 upon a Fair and Impartial Computation  
 it appears, that there were Greater Ex-  
 pences upon Publick Works of Charity  
 (such, I mean, as we are at present dis-  
 couraging of) in Sixty Years after the Re-  
 formation, than had been in Five times  
 that Number of Years, while Popery  
 stood: some have added, ~~se~~ than there  
 were from the *Conquest* down to King  
*Edward the Sixth*; that Good and Ex-  
 cellent Prince, the Great Promoter and En-  
 courager of these Works; and Who  
 not to be mentioned, without particular

Honour

Honour, in This House, which acknow-  
 ledges him for Her Pious and Munifi-  
 cent Founder. I cannot but observe to You, here,  
 that this was the Ruling Part of This  
 Great City, with a Good Bishop of Lon-  
 don, and Martyr for the Protestant Reli-  
 gion, at the Head of them, that by their  
 United Application stirr'd up that Young  
 Prince to undertake so publick-spirited a  
 Design. And it is Natural for me also at  
 the same Time to wish, that That Ho-  
 nourable Body may thus heartily always  
 continue to join Their Endeavours and  
 Interests with those of Their Right Reve-  
 rend *Diocesan*, in promoting Publick  
 Charities, and Publick Blessings of any  
 kind, either in Church, or State. Indeed,  
 it must always be remember'd, to the  
 Honour of This Great Body, That, as  
 Her Foundations of Charity are larger,  
 for ought I can find, than those of  
 any Other City in the Christian World;  
 so they were All rais'd and endowed, ei-  
 ther directly by Her Own Members; or  
 by Other Hands, yet at Her earnest and  
 importunate Suit: So that the Fabricks,  
 and



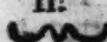
SERMON and Revenues of this Kind, that belong  
 II to Her, are not only (as in Other Parts)  
 the Useful Ornaments of the Place, but so  
 many standing Monuments also of the  
 Great Piety, and Unparallel'd Bounty of  
 Her Ancestors; who solicited the Cause  
 of the Poor and the Infirm, the Lame and  
 Wounded, the Vagrant and Lunatick,  
 with such a particular Industry and Zeal  
 as had those Great and Blessed Effects,  
 which we at This Day see and feel. A  
 Zeal, never to be forgotten by Men  
 and which, we hope, God also will ne-  
 ver forget! but, when he comes down  
 to Visit this City for the many Ill Effects  
 of Wealth misapply'd, will, for the sake  
 of it, Visit in Mercy, and consider the  
*Multitude of Her Charities* as well as  
 That of Her Sins; Graciously allowing  
 the One to be in some Measure a Counter-  
 to the Other!

But I have not Room to speak severally  
 of All the Great Benefactions with which  
 She abounds; and am call'd upon, by the  
 Occasion of this Present Assembly, to say  
 somewhat more particularly of those of  
 This Place.

I think

I think it, by no means, a fit and decent thing to vie Charities, and to erect the Reputation of One upon the Ruins of another: This is, for the sake of Charity to forget the True Character, and Essential Properties of it; which are, as St. Paul tells us, *to be kind, and not to envy, not to vaunt it self, or be puffed up, not to behave it self unseemly.* However, This, I think, I may say, with Modesty and Truth, to the Advantage of That Charity to which we belong; That, though the Bottom of Wealth, it stands upon, be not so Large as that of some Others, yet is it in the Design of it so Comprehensive and Full, as not any where, I think, to be parallell'd.

Here are Supplies to Outward Want and Necessity liberally imparted; The Poor and Fatherless, not only taken Care of, but so bred up, as to be useful to the Common-wealth, and perhaps to take care of many others. Here Idle, and Useless, (and therefore Necessitous) Persons are taught the Best of Lessons, Labour; inur'd to it, and made acquainted with it; and then sent out with such a Stock

SERM. II.  Stock of Industry, as will do them more real Service than any Other Kind of Benefaction, if They will but make use of it, and improve it.

Here, Loose Men and Women are reduc'd by wholesome Discipline, and Vagrants by Confinement: Punishment itself is made an Instrument of Mercy and Goodness; and, as Meat is provided for the Belly, so is there *a Rod for the Back of Fools*. These Particular Instances of Charity deserve to be enlarg'd on. It is an Argument that hath not yet been handled in its utmost Extent, and may perhaps ask Your Patience, on some Other Occasion: but the Time to which I am confin'd, is now almost run out, and there are yet Other Instances behind, to be insisted on. For

Here, not only External Necessities are relieved, but Inward Wants also are supply'd; not Ill Manners only are outwardly corrected, but Ill Dispositions also are better'd, Ill Minds reform'd. And Every single Instance in this kind is not confin'd to the Person who receives the Benefit, but is a real Service to a

whole



whole Community. It puts a stop to a **SERM.**  
 spreading Plague; nay, it gets Ground **H.**  
 upon it, by making Those, who have had  
 the Infection, turn Physicians to Others,  
 by their Example, and Future Good Man-  
 ners. **W**  
 Nay, Here, Men recover their Un-  
 derstandings as well as their Virtues;  
 that is, they recover their Very Selves:  
 and are made once again Members of the  
 rational Creation, able to See and Know  
 their Duty, and to Guide themselves by  
 that Knowledge of it, to pay their *Rea-*  
*sonable Service* to God, and to maintain  
 Civil Intercourse with Men.  
 And on this Occasion, that *Worthy and*  
*learned Person* deserves a particular, and  
 grateful mention, who hath, by his Emi-  
 nent Skill, assisted the Hospital to be Cha-  
 ritable in This Way, to much greater  
 numbers of *Lunatics*, than have been  
 known to be Cured in Former Times.  
 So that this Great Receptacle of Mife-  
 rable Objects of every kind, seems to be  
 that Medicinal Pool at *Bethesda*, where  
 there were Virtues proper for every Ma-  
 nly; all Infirmities were equally heal'd,

SERM. in Those, who had the Happiness to get  
 II into it. I can carry the Parallel no farther, I thank God. ---- For the Prudence and Vigilance of its Governours, as it hitherto hath, so, I question not, always will take Care, that (Contrary to what happen'd to the Impotent Man in That Story) They who have most need of the Pool, shall ever have the Happiness to get first into it. Impartiality is the Soul of Mercy, as well as Justice; and adds Farther Degrees of Use and Beauty to the most Useful and Beautiful Thing in the World.

To give You, therefore, in little the true Character of This Great Benefaction; As Charity comprizeth almost all Kinds of Virtues; so doth This Foundation take in almost all Sorts of Charities!

But tho' all the Chief kinds of Beneficence are here pursu'd, yet many Miserable Objects in Each Kind are not possible to be reach'd, with the present Stock of Charity, which belongs either to The Hospital, or to all Her Other Rivals in This Labour of Love. God open the

Hand

Hands of the Rich, and direct the Hearts SERM.  
II.  
of the Merciful, to build upon the Foundation Their Forefathers have laid; and to supply what is wanting, to compleat Their Designs! Approving Themselves thus, the true Heirs of Their Piety and Bounty, as well as of their Wealth! Else these Great Buildings and Endowments of a former Age, like the Virtuous Acts and Achievements of the first Founders of Noble Families, will become a Reproach, rather than be an Honour, to a Degenerate and Worthless Posterity.

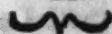
Consider with Your Selves, how God hath blest this City for the sake of the mighty Works that have been done in Her; I say, for the *sake* of them. --- For let a Man carry his Thoughts back to that Time, when these Good Designs were first set on foot, and He shall find, that from thence the Rise and Growth of this City in Trade, Wealth, Interest, and Greatness, is precisely to be dated.

May it grow on, in the same Proportion! and by the same Means also! That may there still be found such a Number of Charitable Persons in it, as will



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continue the Character which hath hitherto belong'd to it; and, by That means, secure the Continuation of God's Blessings upon it. May Charity go on *to have its perfect Work*; not Living merely upon the Old Stock, not continuing at a stay; but Growing and Increasing still, as the Necessities of Some Men increase, and the Abilities of Others to Relieve them! And thus spreading it self to a wider Compass, it shall assuredly procure a Greater Share of God's Mercies, and Cover a greater *Multitude of our Sins.*

*That This may be the Case, the Good and Merciful God grant, through the Great Steward and Dispenser of his Mercies, Christ the Righteous! To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour, Adoration, and Praise; Now, and Ever Amen!*



*The Miraculous Propagation of the Gospel.*

A  
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL;

October 21. 1694.

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand; and  
a Small one, a strong Nation: I, the  
Lord will hasten it, in His Time,*

THE Evangelic Prophet is very par- SERM.  
ticular, throughout this Chapter, III.  
in describing the sudden and mighty increase  
of Christianity, its triumphant progress,  
G 3 thro'

SER M. thro' all Nations, and its prevalence over  
 III. all the other Religions of the World. And  
 this wondrous Enlargement of it he takes  
 occasion (at the close of the Chapter) to  
 represent as so much the more Amira-  
 ble, on the account of that Small Ap-  
 pearance it should make at first, those  
 Slender and Unpromising Beginnings,  
 with which it should set out. *A little*  
*one*, says he, in the Words I have read  
 to you, *shall become a Thousand*; and a  
*Small one, a strong Nation*: *I, the Lord,*  
*will hasten it, in His* (i. e. in the Mes-  
 siah's) *time*. From which words, there-  
 fore, I shall without farther Preface, take  
 occasion to raise these several Heads of  
 Discourse.

I. *First*, I shall briefly represent to You  
 the *matter of Fact* it self, to which this  
 Prophecy refers, how *swift* and *strange*  
 a *Progress* the Gospel made, at, and after  
 its first setting out from *Jerusalem*.

II. *Secondly*, I shall prove to you, that this  
*Success* of it *must* have been *Miraculous*,  
 and owing *chiefly* to the mighty Opera-  
 tions, and effectual Assistances of the Ho-



ly Spirit of God. After establishing which **SERM.**  
great Truth upon firm and proper Argu-  
ments, I shall, in the **III.**

*Third* place, fairly lay together what **III.**  
can be offer'd to evade the force of them;  
and give the several *Objections*, their *An-*  
*swers*.

*Fourthly*, I shall consider, how Great **IV.**  
and how Distinguishing an *Advantage*  
this was to the *Christian Institution*; and  
to what *Useful Ends* and *Purposes* the  
Consideration of may be apply'd.

*Fifthly*, and *Lastly*, I shall enquire in- **V.**  
to the time *when*, and the manner *how*,  
this *Miracle* ceas'd; and make some fair-  
able Reflections upon it, with regard, both  
to Those who liv'd Then, when this  
Stop was put to the Gospel; and to Us,  
who live Now, in the Latter Ages of  
the World.

*First*, I am to represent to You the **I.**  
*Matter of Fact* itself, to which the Pro-  
phesy of the Text refers; how *swift* and  
*Strange* a *Progress* the *Gospel* really made  
it, and after its first setting out from  
*Jerusalem*. And the account of this is

SERM.  
III.as much above Imagination, as it is beyond  
Dispute.

From St. *Luke* we learn, that, upon the  
Ascent of Our Saviour, the *little Flock*,  
He had gather'd, consisted of but *One hun-*  
*dred and twenty* Disciples: These receiv'd  
a mighty addition to their number, on  
the very day of Pentecost, (the day, on  
which the *Gospel*, as well as the *Law*,  
was first *promulg'd*); even on That day  
*Three Thousand Souls* were brought over  
to the Faith, by a Sermon of St. *Peter's*:  
so well did that Spiritual Fisher begin to  
make good the Character, which Christ  
had given of him, that *he should catch Men*.

*Acts vi. 7.* After this, *the number of the Disciples mul-*  
*tiplied in Jerusalem greatly*, faith the same  
holy Pen, (greatly, even in proportion to  
their first increase): and from thence the  
Doctrine was soon carried into all the Re-  
moter Regions of the Earth; insomuch  
that the Book of the *Apostles Acts* (which  
being written by St. *Luke*, the Companion  
of St. *Paul*, is chiefly taken up in giving  
an Account of that particular Apostle's  
Labours, and Travels; and of those of  
them only, which he underwent in the

First years of his Ministry: I say, even SERM.  
this Book it self) doth contain an account III.  
of the spreading of the Gospel, forwards,  
thro' many Eastern Countries; and, back-  
wards, thro' a great part of the West;  
of its piercing, on the one side, into all  
the Civiliz'd, and some of the Barba-  
rous Provinces of *Asia*; and, on the  
other, as far as the great Metropolis of  
*Europe*, *Rome* it self; *so mightily grew* Acts xix.  
*the Word of God, and prevail'd!* 20.

Indeed, The Writers of the Story of  
the Church do with one consent agree,  
that *Scythia*, *India*, *Gaul*, and *Egypt*, all  
the most distant parts of the World Then  
known, had the Doctrine of Christ con-  
veyed to them in less than forty years,  
i. e. before the destruction of the *Jewish*  
State by *Titus*.

And what degree of Success the Voice  
of these Preachers had in the several  
Countries, thro' which it sounded, we  
may learn from the Antient Apologists,  
who, e'er Two Centuries were as yet  
run out, pleaded for Christianity, on the  
account of its vast and incredible num-  
bers; represented to the Heathen Em-  
perors,



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perors, that their Courts, their Camps, their Cities, their Provinces, were all full of them; and that it was impossible to extirpate them, without destroying the far Greater part of their Subjects.

The Gospel is frequently in the New Testament compar'd to *Light*: and it did in nothing more resemble Light than in This, that, as soon as the Heavenly Doctrine, therein contain'd, arose upon the World, it darted its Bright Rays, and and diffus'd its quickning Influence from East to West, with an unconceivable Swift-  
 ness. This *Kingdom of God came not with Observation, neither could Men say, Lo Here, and Lo There!* That is, (as we may interpret the Words) it did not establish it self like other Kingdoms, in a slow and leisure manner, so as that Lookers-on might trace it easily from its Rise through the several Steps of its Progress; but fix'd it self at once almost every where, with so rapid and amazing a Course, as did, as it were, leave the Eyes and Observation of Men behind it. And still, as it went along, it gain'd mighty spoils from all Religions, and gather'd

Luk. xvii.  
20, 21.

gather'd vast multitudes of every Country under its Banners. And, therefore, SERM.  
III.

well did the Founder of this Kingdom thus prophesy concerning it: *Unto* Luk. xiii.  
18, 19, 20,  
21.

*what is the Kingdom of God like? And whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a Grain of Mustard-seed, which a Man took, and threw into his Garden; and it grew, and waxed a great Tree: and the Fowls of the Air lodged in the Branches of it. And, again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is like Leaven, which a Woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until the Whole was leavened.*

But because the matter of Fact it self, [That there was such a sudden and prodigious increase of Converts to Christianity] is on all Hands so well agreed upon, as to need no solemn Proof; it may suffice to have given this short Account of it.

I go on now, in the *Second* place, to II.  
prove, that this Success of the Gospel was certainly *miraculous*, and owing chiefly to the mighty Operations, and effectual Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God:  
and

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and that, for this plain Reason; because the *Natural* and *Visible* Causes, which concurr'd to the production of this great Effect, were not any ways Equal to the Effect produc'd; and, therefore, some *Supernatural* and *Invisible* Cause must needs have given birth to it.

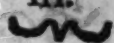
The *Appearing* Causes and Instruments of this Wondrous Revolution were, chiefly, Twelve Men, of obscure Birth and Parentage, of the meanest Education, of the plainest and simplest Understandings, unpolish'd by Learning and Eloquence, unimprov'd by Experience and Conversation; Men of no Subtlety, no Art, no Address, who had no manner of Authority, Interest, or Repute in the World. These Men undertake to convince the World, that One *Jesus*, a Man, who had just before expir'd publicly on a Cross, was the true God, blessed for ever; and, in consequence of this, to preach up a Doctrine the most unwelcome to *Flesh* and *Blood* that could be, the most repugnant to *Mens* natural Desires and Inclinations, to their settled Habits, and inveterate Prejudices; contrary to the Establish'd Rites



Rites and Religions of all Countries, and SERM.  
in all Ages of the World. They set out III.  
from *Jerusalem*, with this Design; they  
disperse themselves thro' all the quarters of  
the Earth, they succeed every where: and,  
in a very short time, prevail with great  
Multitudes, in every Nation, and King-  
dom, to submit to the Laws, and to own  
the Religion of Jesus.

Now, I say, here was no manner of Pro-  
portion between the Cause, and its Effect;  
between the Work which was wrought,  
and the Instruments which wrought it:  
and therefore we may, and must from hence  
conclude, that a Divine Invisible Power  
went along with them in every Step,  
and *miraculously* bless'd their Endeavours.  
Which Truth that it may appear to you in  
its full Strength and Evidence, I shall con-  
sider more particularly, Which (naturally  
speaking) are the best Advantages for a  
New Opinion to set up with, and under  
what Circumstances it is most likely to  
prevail; and I shall shew, that the Chri-  
tian Religion was utterly destitute of  
Every One of these Advantages, and yet,  
nevertheless, *did* prevail.

Now



Now there are *Four* Things, that chiefly conduce towards the spreading of any New Doctrine, and most remarkably make way for its reception in the World.

As, 1<sup>st</sup>, If the *Principles* of it be suited to the *Lusts*, the *Interests*, and *Wishes* of Those, among whom it is to be propagated.

2<sup>dly</sup>, If it be *supported* and *countenanced* by Persons in *Power* and *Authority*, of great *Name* and *Note*; if it be either forcibly obtruded upon Men by *Sanguinary Laws* and *Edicts*, or more indirectly advanc'd by *Art*, and *Management*, and the *Methods* of worldly *Prudence*.

3<sup>dly</sup>, If it be first brought into the World in *dark* and *barbarous Ages*, when Men are either too *Rude* and *Illiterate*, to be Able to weigh, and dispute the *Truth* of it, or too much sunk in *Sloth* and *Vice*, to be *Willing* to do it. Or,

4<sup>thly</sup>, If it be not proposed to Men, all at once, but be insinuated into them by *Degrees*; *Secretly*, and *Insensibly*.

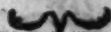
1. As to the *First* of these, it is certain, that nothing recommends a new Doctrine so much, or goes so far towards promoting an Universal Reception of it, as its falling in with the corrupt Desires and Inclinations, the Passions and Prejudices of Men. For Men are, without difficulty, brought to believe an Opinion true, which they wish true beforehand. And This was the Way in which that cunning Impostor, *Mahomet*, set up for a new Prophet. He made his Doctrine as relishing and palatable as he could; contriv'd it, on purpose, so as that it might gratify Mens Lusts and Appetites; and, especially, that it might comply with the loose and wanton Manners of the *East*, where he erected his Standard.

And thus also, ever since, hath Liberalism of all kinds promoted its Interest, and increas'd its Party. False and foolish Opinions have gotten footing, and thriven, in prejudice to true Religion, and sound Morality; because there was something in them, which flatter'd either our Vanity,



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nity, our Lust, or our Pride, and fell in with a darling Inclination. And to this single Art Mr. *Hobbs* ow'd all his Reputation, and his Followers: it was not his Philosophy, and his boasted Reason, that drew men in; but the skill he had in fitting his Principles to men's Constitutions, and Tempers: He knew what would take, and be lik'd; and he knew how to express it after a taking manner; and no wonder then, if it were greedily entertain'd. To talk against receiv'd Opinions, and in behalf of some belov'd Vices, and Frailties; to dress up his Discourse in all the natural Beauties of Language, and to give it beside the Air (and he gave it nothing but the Air) of Demonstration; This, he saw, would be a sure way of engaging the Men of Wit and Pleasure on his side; and This, therefore, he follow'd, with application and success; like

Luke xvi. 8. one of the *Children of This World*, who are, in their Generation, wiser than the *Children of Light*.

But Christianity, when it set out, took none of these methods of recommending it self, and enlarging its Interests:

rests: on the contrary, it propos'd plain, naked Truths, without Colours, and Disguises, or any regard to what was Agreeable and Pleasing. It held forth high and unconceivable Myſteries, which the Pride of Man would make him apt to suspect, because he could not perfectly comprehend; and it preach'd up harsh and ungrateful Doctrines, which did violence to Mens Natures, and which it was death to them to think of entertaining. And yet, I say, under this great Disadvantage it made its way, and prosper'd. But,

2dly, It is another great Advantage to rising Opinion, if it be espous'd by Men of Authority, Repute, and Parts; who may either force its way into the World by dint of Power, or bring it about by arts of Management, and Contrivance. In this manner the Prophet of the East shew'd out his way by the power of the word; took advantage from the divisions and weakness of Christendom, to turn a Savage Multitude, and make large roads upon it; and, having, first,  
VOL. I. H brought

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brought into subjection the Bodies of Men, had no hard Task, afterwards, to enslave their Souls.

In like manner the Papal Usurpations often prevail'd; the Bishops of *Rome* got Zealous Princes into their Interest, and made them blindly obedient to the Holy See; and then, by Their help, impos'd their own Decrees upon whole unwilling Provinces and Kingdoms. And, as some of their Encroachments thus got footing, so many others, we know, were brought in, at first, and have been supported ever since, by the highest and most refined Arts of Policy. That See hath never wanted, from the very moment since it first set up its Pretences, a number of skilful Managers, who have continually pleaded its Cause, and carried on its Interests, with all the Dexterity and Address, with all the Industry and Zeal, which Human Wit is capable: It hath ever had the warmest, and ablest, (I had almost said the wisest) Heads employ'd in its defence; and hath taken care to make sure of them, by Bountiful Rewards, dealt out in proportion to their Services.



of the GOSPEL.

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Services; and by making a Zeal for the Papal Chair, a sure and never-failing step towards all manner of Honours and Advantages; and no wonder, therefore, if its Delusions have spread so far, and wide, and infected such Numbers.

It was much the same case, with regard to the broachers of Heresy in the antient Church; they were generally leading Men, of some Figure and Repute in the world, of great Wit and Subtlety; and, by the Help of these, they were able to raise a Dust, and make a Noise; to form a Party, and set themselves at the Head of it.

But now, when Christianity first appear'd, how weak and defenceless was it, how artless and undesigning! How utterly unsupported either by the Secular Arm, or Secular Wisdom! *I send you* Matth. x. 16, *forth, said our Saviour to his Apostles, as Sheep in the midst of Wolves:* And, accordingly, they went forth, in the spirit of Simplicity, of Humility, and Meekness; arm'd only with Truth, and Innocence; a good Cause, and an equal Resolution: *The Weapons of their Warfare* 2 Cor. x. 4.

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*fare were not Carnal, but Spiritual!* The Messengers of these glad Tidings were so far from having a Name in the World, that they were contemptible: were scorned, as *Jews*, by the rest of Mankind; and as the meanest and lowest of *Jews*, by the *Jews* themselves; and were not likely, therefore, to credit the high Embassy, on which they came. They left their Nets, and their Hooks, (the Only things, probably, that they understood) to come into a New World, wherein they were perfect Strangers, and to preach a New Gospel, with which all Men were unacquainted: and they preach'd it, not to the *Wise*, the *Mighty*, or the *Noble*, who, when converted, might have forwarded its Reception by their Influence; but to the *Foolish*, *Weak*, and *Base*, who were able to do nothing for its Advantage, but by Living according to the Rules, and Dying for the Truth of it. As they had no Help from the Powers of this World, Civil or Military, so had they all the Opposition that was possible, which they withstood, and baffled: they sow'd the good Seed of the Word under

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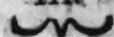
III.

the very Feet of the *Roman* Magistrates, and Soldiers, who, though they trod it down, and rooted it up, yet could not destroy it so far, but that still it sprang out again, and yielded a fruitful and glorious Harvest. A

3<sup>d</sup> Thing, that promotes the Progress of a New Religion, is, if it be brought into the World, in Dark and Barbarous Times; when Men are either too Rude and Illiterate, to be Able to weigh, and to dispute the Truth of it, or too much sunk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing to do it. And This, again, cannot but put us in mind of the *Romish* Superstitions: for it is plain, that they took That time of settling and spreading their Empire, which, of all times since the coming of Christ, was the most Ignorant, and the least Inquisitive; when Men were Vicious, Lazy, Dispirited, Fearful, and Credulous; when gross Darknes sat upon the Face of the West; when the Irruptions of the *Goths* and *Vandals* had destroy'd all the Old Learning, as well as the Old Buildings, and left nothing

H 3 but





but Ignorance and Barbarity behind them. Then, in that *Night*, as the Parable speaks, did the cunning *Enemy* come, and *sow his Tares*, when there was no body at work, or awake to observe him. And, when he had thus covertly sown them, what Wonder was it, that they should grow up together with the Corn, and Flourish?

But did the Gospel make such Advantages as these of Mens Credulity, and Supineness? No, it took all ways of being Try'd and Examin'd to the uttermost. It alarm'd the World a good while before-hand, and gave fair Warning of its approach, by plain Signs, and Predictions: and if the Prophecies of the Old Testament will not be admitted as Proofs in this case, sure *Tacitus* and *Virgil* may be heard; the First of which lays it down as a known Truth, that there was (about the time of our Saviour) a strong Tradition, thro' all the *East*, of a certain mighty Prince that was then, and there expected to arise, and to govern the World; and the Latter, out of the *Sibylline* Verses, transcrib'd such an Account of things

as did evidently, and could only belong to the Days of the Gospel, and the Reign of the Messiah.

But the most Observable thing on this Head, is, that God pitch'd upon that particular Point of Time, for the manifestation of his Gospel, when Good Sense, and Learning, and Wit, were at the highest; when the Roman Empire was in its full Glory, and, together with it, all the Arts and Sciences flourish'd: when the World enjoy'd a profound Peace, and was at Liberty to examine the Truth of an Opinion, which set up with such pretences. Then did the Glorious Light of the Gospel shine forth, and dazle the Eyes even of Those, who were thought to see best, and farthest. And soon afterwards the Apostles open'd their Heavenly Commission, and executed it publicly; challenging those who look'd on, with all their Curiosity, Subtlety, and Spite, to disprove, or blemish it. The Doctrine of the Cross shew'd it self barefac'd to all the Wits and Sages of both *Rome* and *Athens*; and defy'd their Doubts, and their Reasonings. And yet, under

SERM. These discouraging Circumstances also,  
 III.  it took root downwards, and brought forth  
 fruit upwards, speedily, and abundantly. A

4th Help towards establishing any New Opinions in Religion is, if they be not propos'd to Men all at Once, but insinuated into them only by insensible Steps and Degrees : and this method hath often made way for the belief of the most monstrous Doctrines, and the entertainment of the wildest Absurdities. Witness [once more] several Articles in the *Roman Catholic* Faith ; which, had they been offer'd to the Minds of Men, at first, in their full Latitude, had been rejected with indignation and horror ; but being propos'd at half Views, and advanc'd by little and little, were also gradually admitted by Men, not well aware of their Utmost Import and Tendency : every first step into Error smoothing the way towards a second, and so on, till the passage was widen'd enough for the Groffest Contradictions to enter in at it.



Far from this Artificial Method of SERM.  
winning belief, was the Religion of Je- III.  
*sus* : Upon its first appearance, after the  
Descent of the Holy Ghost, it offer'd it  
self to the View of Men, at full length,  
and in all its proportions. No Moral  
Precept was reserv'd for a more Conve-  
nient Time, no Doctrine (no Great, Fun-  
damental Doctrine) was disguis'd, or  
conceal'd. The Message it brought, it  
deliver'd, plainly and openly, at once;  
the most unwelcome Practical Truths,  
as well as Those, which were better  
Known, and Receiv'd; the Sublimest  
Points of Faith, together with such as  
were more Easie and Credible.

The Primitive Apostles did not, like  
those of a Later date, the Fathers of the  
Mission of *China*, preach up first a *Glori-*  
*fy'd*, and then a *Crucify'd* Saviour; but  
bore the Scandal of the Cross whereso-  
ever, and to whomsoever they open'd  
the Doctrines of it: The *slaying* of Je-  
*sus*, and his being *hanged on a Tree*, is Acts v. 30.  
mention'd in one of the first Sermons of  
*St. Peter*. This (humanely speaking) was  
an Unlikely way of gaining Profelytes;  
and

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and yet, as unlikely a Way as it was  
 Thus were innumerable Profelytes gain'd

Let us lay together what hath been said: --- The Gospel of Christ, as its Earliest appearance, had all the Probabilities in the World *against* its Success: for it was possess'd scarce of any One of those advantages, which do most signally recommend a new Doctrine, and make it thrive. It had no Complying Tenets, to sooth Mens Appetites and Passions, but was all Harsh and Austere. It had no Encouragement, no protection from the Civil Power; no Force, or Cunning to uphold it; no Men of Eminence, and Esteem to engage on its side. The Age, which was pitch'd upon for the discovery of it, was more discerning and enlightned, more curious and inquisitive than, perhaps, any that either preceded or followed it: and therefore the Success of this Doctrine could not be owing to Mens Ignorance or Supineness. Finally, its Promulgers deliver'd it not out by Parcels, as is the way of Cunning and Designing Men; but offer'd the Whole

of it to be all together examined, and compared. Nevertheless, though press'd with All These Clogs and Incumbrances, it sprang forth, and made its way into the World, by a swift and incredible Progress.

The Inference from hence is plain and indubitable; That a Divine Power and Virtue certainly went along with it, to supply what was Wanting to it, upon Other accounts; and that its *Increase* must needs have been *Supernatural*, and *Miraculous*: so that, we were acquainted with nothing more, concerning the Apostles, than what the Four Evangelists have left us; were the Book of their *Acts* lost, and, together with it, an account of the wondrous Effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them, at the Day of Pentecost; and of the mighty Signs and Wonders, which they afterwards perform'd, in Virtue of that *Uction*: I say, were we in the Dark to all these Transactions, which declare the Christian Religion to have been *propagated* by *Miracle*; yet still every Considering Man must think that there was some-  
what

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III.  
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SER. M. what *Miraculous* in it. Such an Increase, from such beginnings; such a wonderful Revolution, brought about by such weak and disproportion'd Instruments; is itself a *Miracle*, and the greatest of Miracles; and doth as evidently assure us, that the Preaching of the

1 Cor. ii. Apostles was in the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*, as if we had heard them speaking Strange Tongues, seen them healing the Blind and Lame, and reviving the Dead.

III. In which Truth that we may be yet farther confirm'd, let us consider (as I propos'd), in the *Third Place*, what Shifts the Enemies of the Gospel make use of, to evade the Force of this pressing Argument. And the utmost that any of them pretend to say, is, as follows. 'Tis true, they will own, Christians multiply'd very fast; and the Increase of them was, in some sense, *Miraculous*: That is, it was *wonderful*; as every Unusual Thing is to Those, who do not know, or consider the Causes of it. But to a man, they say, who dares to go out of the Common road,

road, and to think for himself, it will appear, that there was at that time a Set of *Natural* Causes on foot, sufficient to account for this Effect, without any recourse to a *Divine* and *Supernatural* Agent. The Apostles indeed were twelve plain Illiterate Men, who had not, of Themselves, force, or skill enough, to bring about such an Event: but their Natural Inability was supply'd by a favorable Juncture, by an happy Coincidence of such Conspiring Causes, and Accidental Advantages, as mightily help'd on the Work. For Example,

The *Sufferings* of those poor bigotted Creatures, the *Martyrs*, made mighty impressions upon Men; especially upon those of the same Rank with the Sufferers, the Common people; who never fail to take the side of the Oppress'd, and to think That Cause good (let it be what it will), for the Profession of which Men are us'd ill. Then, the *Purity* of the *Christian Morals* was a mighty Argument to bring the Men of Probity and Vertue into the Interests of the Gospel. And so likewise was the *Analogy* of some of its

*Mystical*

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*Mystical Truths, to the Doctrines of Plato*  
 (then in great esteem and vogue), a very good Bait to the Men of Philosophy, and Learning. The *Distribution* of Goods, which the first Christians made, and their Living together in Common, was a good Reason for many Mens embracing the Faith, which, they were sure, would maintain them. The Casual Cessation of *Oracles* was immediately turn'd to the Advantage of the Religion of *Christ*, as *That* had procur'd it. And the destruction of the *Jewish State*, contributed greatly to the Increase of the Christian Numbers; because it seem'd to have been foretold by the Founder of their Faith: and therefore, luckily coming to pass about that time, rais'd an high Opinion in Men of his Person, and Doctrine; and inclin'd them to think, that His Institution, then newly set up, was design'd by God to succeed in the Room of the *Jewish Establishment*, which, about the same time, hapned to be pull'd down. In the mean while, the *Rulers* of the World over-look'd, and neglected to crush, a Doctrine, which was so harmless in it self, and



of the G O S P E L.

III

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and so unlikely to succeed, on the account  
of its Abettors; till, through Their Con-  
nivance, it was at last Universally re-  
ceiv'd among the Vulgar sort, and the  
Number of its Votaries was grown so  
formidable, that even Princes themselves  
were forc'd, for their Own Ease and In-  
terest, to come into it, and profess it.

And thus, say they, several extraor-  
dinary and unheeded Advantages con-  
curring to favour the Growth of Chris-  
tianity, it grew indeed mightily, and pre-  
vail'd; as a little River will swell high,  
and spread it self wide, and run far, when  
swoln by Casual Rains, and by many  
other Streams, which have emptied them-  
selves at once into it. Such is the Ac-  
count they pretend to give of the Rise  
and Progress of our Faith, from *second*  
*Causes*, without calling a *first*, to solve  
the Appearance.

In opposition to these Pretences, I will  
shew, that the Causes here assign'd were  
utterly insufficient to produce the Event,  
for which they are assign'd: a short Re-  
view of them, I think, (and the time  
will

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will allow of but a short one) will easily satisfy us concerning it.

The *Blood of the Martyrs* was, indeed, what it hath been often styl'd, the *Seed of the Church*: but how? Not, certainly, by alluring Men to the Profession of Christianity, at the Time *when* those Martyrs suffer'd; for nothing could have a greater tendency to frighten and discourage men from professing the Gospel, than to find, that they should be persecuted, and must die for it. This only is meant by that Saying, and thus far it holds good; That the Sufferings and Torments, which the first Christians underwent so willingly and bravely, were a strong Evidence of the Truth of that Doctrine, which could inspire its Followers with so much Courage, Constancy, and Patience, and dispos'd Men mightily to embrace the Religion of Christ *afterwards*, in better and more quiet Times. But before that this Motive could have any considerable Force and Influence, the Gospel had *already* spread and settled itself every where, and therefore nothing can well be accounted

counted for by it, but the Accession <sup>SERM.</sup> which was made to Christianity, <sup>III.</sup> after it was sufficiently establish'd; and This, we are ready to confess, had nothing Extraordinary in it, nor are we at present making any Enquiries concerning it.

The same Answer serves to disprove that Other pretended account of this Increase, drawn from the *Destruction of the Jewish State*. We allow it to have added to the Numbers of Christian Converts, *when* it hapned: but it hapned not till near forty Years after the Death of Christ; and by that time, Christianity was strong enough of itself, and needed no Aids. And, even when this Event hapned, tho' several *Jews* promoted the Interests of the Gospel, by embracing the Faith; yet the Obstinate Part of them, which stood out, did it much more harm than the Profelytes did it good. For the uncomplying *Jews* were not satisfy'd with \*rejecting Christianity, themselves; but made it their business to ren-

\* See the Passage in Philo Judæus, about the Embassy sent from the Jews to their Brethren in all Parts of the World, exhorting them to reject the Progress of Christianity.



SERMON III.  
 under it odious, suspected, and contemptible to the Heathens also, in all the Corners of the *Earth*, to which they were driven.

The Purity of the *Christian Morals*, and the answerable Lives of *Christian Converts*, did indeed very naturally lead Men to admire and value the Doctrine of Christ; but, by no means, to come under the Yoke of it: for tho' Most Men have an Esteem for strict Rules, and strict Livers; yet Few care to practice the one, or to imitate the other. And nothing, I think, could be contriv'd so effectual, (next to the former wise Motive from the Sufferings of the Martyrs) to deter Men from Christianity, as to tell them, that, when they took it upon them, they must renounce their dear Appetites, and Passions, and deny themselves. And I desire the Men, who raise these Objections against the Divine Original of the Gospel, to tell us fairly whether, if they had liv'd at that time, they would have come in upon *This Principle*. I am sure, they would not; because it is *This Principle* alone, (that they must



part with their unlawful Satisfaction, and Pleasures, if they do] which keeps them out of it now. Therefore, neither can

This be any Sufficient Reason for the sudden and wide Growth of Christianity.

The *Analogy* of some mystical Truths in the Gospel to the Doctrine of Plato, is but a weaker Plea. For this Motive is

calculated to touch but very few, only the Philosophers of the *Academic* School.

And with such, it could have no Great Weight, surely, or, at least, not enough

to over-balance that Scorn and Contempt, with which, on other accounts,

they treated the Christian Religion, and its Promulgers, That, for its short, Un-

philosophical way of proposing Truths, without Demonstration, or Reasoning,

and Those, for their Ignorance, and the Meanness of their Education. Accord-

ingly, we find not that the Sublime My-

steries of our Faith made any Impression on these haughty Reasoners. St. Paul

was derided at *Athens*, when he propos'd

them; nor can we certainly learn that any one Philosopher, of Note, embrac'd

Christian Religion, till it had been for many

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III.

Years preach'd, and disseminated, and had taken deep root in the World.

The *Casual Cessation of Oracles* (as 'tis call'd), about the Time of Promulging the Gospel, was not Casual, but the direct and genuine Effect of it: and, we own, had Men understood it to be so. Then, and imputed the Total Silence of those Oracles to its True Cause, such a Persuasion would have been very useful towards bringing in the Heathen World to the acknowledgment of Christ. But we deny that they did at all understand, or allow it to be so. And for a plain Proof of this, we refer our selves to that Celebrated Discourse in *Plutarch*, about the Reasons of this Cessation; where, among Many, which that Learn'd Man assigns for it, (vain Reasons indeed, and such as shew him to have been at a Loss for the True One!) This of the Coming of Christ, is not mention'd, or hinted at: tho' he gives there such an account of things, that a Christian might easily prove, from what *He* relates, that it was really the Coming of Christ which effected it. But this is a Point of too impo-



tant and nice Nature to be settled incidentally, and might well deserve to be consider'd in an entire Discourse.

Again, neither can any probable account be given of this matter, from the *Charitable Distribution of their Goods, which the first Christians made.* For, supposing that some of the poorer sort might be tempted by this Motive; yet, surely, those who had wherewithal to sustain themselves, and were easy in their Circumstances, did not come in upon it. It will not be said, I hope, that such as made this Distribution of their Goods (which will be found to have been no inconsiderable number) came in themselves to partake of it. Nor could these Hopes have any Great Influence, even on the Meaner sort; since there was something in the Christian Religion, of far more force to frighten them, than this was to allure them; the strict Rules of Honesty and Temperance, according to which they were bound to live, and the great Calamities and Persecutions, which they were sure to undergo.

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Lastly, no weight can be laid in this  
 case, on that Contempt, which Heathen  
 Princes are said to have had of the *Chri-  
 stian Religion*, and the little Care they  
 therefore, took to restrain it: for it is  
 not true, that they stood by unconcerned  
 at its Growth; on the contrary, it is cer-  
 tain, that they look'd upon it with a je-  
 lous Eye, from its first Rise; and the  
 Early Persecutions of *Nero* (not to men-  
 tion those of *Domitian*, which were after  
 the Destruction of *Jerusalem*) shew that  
 he took great notice of it, and ende-  
 avour'd to Extirpate it. However, the  
*Roman Emperors* have been never  
 so regardless of its Increase; yet it is  
 certain that they did no ways Contem-  
 n it; and that every one, who turn'd *Chri-  
 stian*, was sure by that means to for-  
 feir the Favour of his Prince, and to be  
 look'd upon as an Apostate from the  
 Religion of his Country. And how  
 even under such a Pressure as this, *Chri-  
 stianity* have made so Rapid and  
 Astonishing a Progress, if He, who is  
 mightier than the mightiest, had not

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Acts v.

38, 39

bid it go forth and prosper against all Humane Discouragements? Had this Countess, or this Work been of Men, it would, even without any direct Opposition from the Temporal Power, have certainly come to nought, as Gamaliel argued; but being of God, nothing could overthrow it.

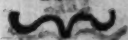
I do not deny, after all, but that Every one of these Particulars might, in a natural way contribute somewhat, either to the Planting, or Spreading of the Gospel. But I think it is evident, from the short Hints I have suggested to you, that All them together were not able to do the thousandth part of that Work which is allotted to them. And, therefore, to resolve this Great Event into a Conspiracy of second Causes, as 'tis call'd, without any regard to the first, is an absurd and senseless Attempt; and only shews us, how very strong an Inclination and Bias there is in Some Minds towards Infidelity, which they can be brought to espouse upon so very slight Grounds.

A Man, who should see an Acorn put into the Earth, and perceive in a few weeks



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III.



weeks, or months, an Oak shooting up from it, to a prodigious height, and spreading its Branches to an amazing extent, so as to over-top the loftiest Mountains, and even to cover the whole Field where it grew; might as well say, that there was a strange *Conspiracy of Natural Causes*, an extraordinary degree of warmth, moisture, and so forth, which concurr'd to produce this effect; as affirm, that the vast Success of the Gospel was owing to those *petty Principles*, from whence Some Men pretend to derive it.

But it must be granted to them, that their Thoughts are of a piece, and that this Opinion of theirs falls in with the rest of their System. For their Account of the *New Creation* by Jesus Christ, is much like that which they give of the *Old* one. It was a Lucky Hit of concurring Causes which propagated Christianity. And it was a Lucky Hit also of dancing Atoms, which first made the World: and 'tis the same Lucky Hit which still preserves and governs it too. They, who can bring themselves to be-

lieve

of the GOSPEL.

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III.

lieve the Latter of these Opinions, may, consistently enough, be suppos'd to entertain the Former. But, certainly, no other Creature, but an Atheist by Complexion, could ever take up with such pitiful Accounts of things.

Well then, The Christian Religion, from small and weak Beginnings, spread it self far, and wide, after a sudden and strange manner; and this it did, against all Probability, and contrary to all the Rules of Success, which all other Rising Opinions have ever set up with: It had no One of those great Advantages, some of which recommend every new Sect, that stands, and prevails: and, as for all other Lesser Helps, and Assurances towards its Increase, which the Wit of Man can assign; they are apparently too weak to sustain the Weight, that is laid on them. It remains, therefore, that this wondrous Effect sprang undoubtedly from the immediate Influence of the First Cause, actuating after an Extraordinary manner the Industry, and blessing the Endeavours of the Apostles; stirring up the Minds of Men

SERMON

III

Men to attend to, and disposing their Hearts to embrace the Truths of the Gospel; in a word, accompanying all they said, and did, with mighty Signs and Wonders, with the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*!

I have fully consider'd *Three* of the *Five* Points, on which I intended to discourse: Having represented to You,

*First*, The Matter of Fact it self, to which the Prophecy of the Text refers; how swift and strange a Progress the Gospel really made, at, and after its first setting out, from *Jerusalem*: Having prov'd to You,

*Secondly*, That this Success of it must have been *Miraculous*. After which I did, in the

*Third* place, fairly lay together what thought might be offer'd to evade the Force of this Argument; and gave the several Objections their Answers. It remains that I should consider,

*Fourthly*, how great and how distinguishing an Advantage this brings to the Christian Institution; and to what Use



ful Ends and Purposes the Consideration **SERM.**  
of it may be apply'd: And then, **III.**

*Lastly*, Enquire into the Time when,  
and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd,  
and make some suitable Reflections upon  
it, with regard both to Those who liv'd  
Then, when this stop was put to the  
Gospel, and to Us who live Now in the  
Latter Ages of the World.

But the handling of these Two Points  
must be the Work of a Second Discourse.



of the Gospel. In all Ends and Purposes the Consideration of it may be apply'd: And then

Lastly, Enquire into the Time when

with the Manner how this Ministry shall

and make some suitable Reflections upon

is, with Regard to those who live

Then, when this Book was put to the

Gospel, and to us who live Now in the

later Ages of the World.

Part I. one shall become a Third Part; and

shall be one, a strong Nation, the

Lord, will bestow it in His Time.

Of the Five Points which I pro-

pos'd, from these Words, to han-

dle, Three have been considered, I come

now, in the

former place, to shew, How great

and how distinguishing an Advantage it is

to the Christian Ministry, to have been

propagated after so swift and unaccount-

able a manner; to what useful Ends

and Purposes the Consideration of it may

be apply'd. And

PART I. This

## PART II.

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand; and  
a Small one, a strong Nation: I, the  
Lord, will hasten it in His Time.*

OF the *Five* Points which I pro-  
pos'd, from these Words, to han-  
dle, *Three* have been consider'd: I come  
now, in the

SERM.  
IV.

*Fourth* place, to shew, How great,  
and how *distinguishing* an *Advantage* it is  
to the Christian Institution, to have been  
propagated after so swift and unaccount-  
able a manner; to what useful *Ends*  
and *Purposes* the Consideration of it may  
be apply'd. And,

IV.

I. This



*1<sup>st</sup>*, This is, I say, an Advantage peculiar to the Christian Institution. For no other Religion ever had so large an Increase, with so little of Humane Aid and Assistance; or prevail'd in such a manner, as to make a Recourse to Supernatural Influences necessary, in order to explain the Success of it. This may be collected in great measure, from what hath been already hinted, in the preceeding Discourse. However, I shall here resume the Reflection, and more particularly and fully evince the Truth of it.

Of all false Religions, the *Mahometan* came nearest to the Christian, in the swiftness of its Propagation, for in a small time it over-ran a great part of the Eastern World. But this Success, how extraordinary soever, had nothing miraculous in it; nothing, but what may easily be accounted for, by reflecting on the Circumstances (already intimated) with which the Propagation of that Imposture was attended: Such, as the loose Manners, and lamentable Divisions of the

Christians

Christians of that time; the Suitableness SERM. 2  
IV.  
of Mahomet's Doctrine to the sensual Inclinations of Men, especially of those Eastern People, to whom it was first address'd; and the Method he us'd of procuring Submission to it, by the Dint of the Sword, not by the Power of Persuasion and Argument. A Religion, that gave a full Indulgence to the Ambition, the Lusts, and Cruelty of Mankind, could not fail of gaining Profelytes; and when a Warlike and Savage Race of Men, united by the hopes of Rapine and Spoil, set upon a dissolute, divided, and weakened Enemy (as the Christians then were) the Success of such an Enterprize was sure and easy; and on the Success of Mahomet's Arms the Success of his Religion depended. When, by an uninterrupted Course of Victories, he had laid the Foundation of the Saracen Empire, it was no wonder that a new Empire should be able to introduce a new Religion: the Increase of the One, was naturally follow'd by a proportionable enlargement of the Other: which, therefore, I say, had nothing miraculous in it;

SER.M. it; nothing, that rivall'd, or any-way  
 IV. resembled the Success of the Gospel—  
 Dan. ii. that *Stone, which was cut out of the*  
 34, 35. *Mountain, without Hands (i. e. without*  
*visible Causes and Instruments, propor-*  
*tion'd to such a Work) and brake in pieces*  
*all other Kingdoms, and at last became it*  
*self a great Mountain, and filled the*  
*whole Earth.*

As to the *Jewish* Religion, it will not  
 admit of any Comparison with the *Chri-*  
*stian*, either as to the Manner of its first  
 Reception, or the Addition of Converts  
 afterwards made to it. It was given to  
 the *Israelites*, by *Moses*, in the Wilder-  
 ness, whither he had led them out of the  
 House of Bondage, in their way to a Land  
*flowing with Milk and Honey.* Now (set-  
 ting aside the Consideration of *Miracles*  
 by which the *Jewish* and Christian Dis-  
 pensations were alike confirm'd) the Re-  
 ception of the *Law* by the *Israelites* from  
 such a Deliverer, under whose Conduct  
 and Command they then entirely were  
 and in a place, where they had no Com-  
 munication with the rest of the World.



had nothing in it near so wonderful as the first Plantation of the Christian Church by means of the Apostles Preaching. And, as to the Accession of Gentile Converts, after the Tabernacle was set up in *Shiloh*; it was too small and inconsiderable, to give the Religion of the Jews any Title, or Pretension to a Divine Original, on that Account.

The narrow Limits of the Jewish Church are thus, under the Emblem of transplanted Vine, aptly represented by the Psalmist. *Thou hast brought (says he) a Vine out of Egypt, Thou hast cast out the Heathen, and planted it; Thou preparedst Room for it, and didst cause it to take deep Root, and it filled the Land, viz. the Land of Jewry, wherein it was set. The Hills (i. e. the Hill-Country of Judah, the farthest Point of Palestine, southward) were covered with the Shadow of it, and the Boughs thereof were like the Cedars of God, on Mount Lebanon, in the Extremity of its Northern borders. She sent out her Boughs into the Sea (the Mediterranean Sea, her ut-*  
Vol. I. K most

SERM. most Limit to the West,) and her Branches  
 IV. to the River, even as far Eastward, as the  
 River *Euphrates*. Thus was the Jew-  
 ish Church, even in its most ample and  
 flourishing Condition, shut up within  
 the Bounds of *Canaan*, and the Countries  
 adjacent: Whereas that *Mustard-Seed*,  
 the Kingdom of *Christ*, though it were  
 less than all the Seeds that be in the  
 Earth, yet, when it was sown, it grew  
 up, and became greater than all the Herbs,  
 and shot out great Branches, and the  
 Fowls of the Air lodged in the Branches  
 of it; Men of all Countries, and all Re-  
 ligions under Heaven flock'd to it for  
 Shade and Shelter,

Luke xiii.  
 19.  
 Mark iv.  
 31, 32.

Indeed, the *Mosaic Law* was intend-  
 ed for a single People only, who were to  
 be shut in, as it were, from the rest of  
 the World, by a Fence of Legal Rites  
 and Typical Ceremonies; and to be  
 kept by that means separate and un-  
 mix'd, till the great Antitype, the *Messiah*,  
 should appear, and break down this  
 Fence, and lay open this Inclosure pub-  
 lishing a Religion, of a more extensive  
 Nature

Nature and Use, which all Mankind should be invited to profess, and in which all should have an equal Interest. To these different Ends the *Law*, and the *Gospel*, were severally design'd; and to these, therefore, the Different Circumstances of their Promulgation, and the chief Parts of their Worship, were severally accommodated. The *Law* was (as I said) given in the Desert, to a particular People; the *Gospel* was publish'd in *Jerusalem*, before a mixt Multitude of various Nations and Languages. The Miracles, by which the *Law* was confirm'd, were done before the *Jews* only, who alone were concern'd in them [for as to those, perform'd by *Moses* in the sight of *Pharaoh*, and the *Agyptians*; were not intended to authorize the *Law*, which was not as yet given, but only to prove his Divine Mission for the Temporal Rescue of that People]: Whereas the *Gospel*-Miracles were wrought before the Enemies of the *Gospel*, in all Countries; because in all Countries the *Gospel* was to be propagated, believ'd, and



SERM.  
IV.

practis'd. The chief Parts of the Jewish Worship (which consisted in Sacrifices) were confin'd to a certain Place, at which all the Males of that Religion were bound, thrice every Year, to appear; and that Religion, therefore, could be intended for such only as liv'd at no great Distance from the Jewish Temple. Whereas, when the Ends of the Earth were to be converted to Christ, the Christian Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, and even the great Oblation of the Eucharist, was to be perform'd every where with equal Degrees of Acceptance, according to the Prediction of *Malachi*, the last Prophet of the Jewish Dispensation. *For from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name shall be great among the Heathen saith the Lord of Hosts.*

Mal. i. ii.

The Jewish, then, and Christian Institutions; as they are widely different in many Respects, so particularly

practis'd

This

This; that the one was, by its original <sup>SREM.</sup>  
Frame and Intention, limited as to Place <sup>IV.</sup>

Persons, and Time: whereas the other was to be diffus'd throughout the World, and to endure together with it, that is, to be, indeed, what we find it not long after its first Erection stil'd, the *Catholick Church*. Whereunto, therefore, shall we liken this Kingdom of God, and its marvellous Increase? or with what Comparison shall we compare it? There is, indeed,

Luke iv, 30.

some faint Resemblance of it in the prodigious Fecundity of *Seeds*; which, accordingly, our Saviour makes use of more than once, to illustrate it: but there is nothing parallel to it in the History of all the Religions which have sprung up, and obtain'd amongst Men, from the beginning of the World to this Day.

And this *peculiar* Advantage of Christianity is so much the more remarkable, because

2dly. It was presignify'd by *Types*, and pretold by various *Prophecies*. And when, therefore, the Event came to pass,

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IV.

it did, as it were, point out its Author, and declare itself to spring from Him, who alone knoweth, and ordereth the Times and the Seasons, and calleth the things that are not, as if they were.

Of Types, the most illustrious, and most worthy of our present Consideration, is That, which relates to the wonderful Increase of the *Israelites in Egypt*, concerning which the Sacred Story speaks in very expressive and emphatical Language: *They are fruitful (says Moses) and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the Land*

Ex. i. 7.

*was filled with them; and this (it seems) notwithstanding the Arts that were used to lessen their Numbers, notwithstanding the great Hardships and Severities that were laid upon them: for again it is said The more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.*

Ib. v. 12.

livelier Image than which there cannot be of the thriving Estate of the Christian Church, under all the Cunning and Malice of its Heathen Persecutors.



the Seed of *Abraham* few, when they first came to sojourn in *Egypt*? no more than seventy Souls? The Number of the first Disciples of Christ, on the Day of Pentecost, when his Gospel began to be propagated, was not much greater. Did the several Kings of *Egypt* keep a jealous Eye over the Children of *Israel*, and take all manner of unjust and cruel Methods to prevent their Increase? just so far'd it with the earliest Professors of the Gospel; the Rulers of the World harass'd and oppress'd them, and did what they could to crush Christianity, in its first Seeds, by severe Edicts, and Penalties, and subtle Contrivances. Did the *Israelites* thrive nevertheless, and multiply exceedingly; so as in the Space of 430 Years, from the time of the Covenant made with *Abraham*, to come out of *Egypt* above 600000 strong, that were Men from twenty Years old and upwards, besides Women and Children, and a mixt multitude, not rank'd into distinct Tribes and Families, that were without Number? The Increase of Christian Converts

SERM.  
IV.

was yet more wonderful; and attended with this remarkable Circumstance of Resemblance, that it came to its utmost Pitch, near the same Period of Time, to wit, about 430 Years after our Saviour had begun to preach and to say, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Such a strict Correspondence there was between these Events, that we may justly reckon the one of them, as design'd to prefigure and typify the other. Especially, since the Promise made to *Abraham*, about the Fertility of his Descendants was so worded by God, as at once to include the the Increase of his *Natural* and *Spiritual* Seed, and plainly to point out that Access of Converts from all Nations to the Church, which should happen in the Days of the *Messiah*. *In blessing I will bless thee*, said God, *and in multiplying I will multiply thy Seed, as the Stars of the Heaven, and as the Sand which is upon the Sea-shore. And in thy Seed* (i. e. in *Christ*, the promis'd Seed) *shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* God begins we see, with the Assurance of a Tempo-

ral Blessing, a numerous Off-spring, according to the Flesh, and ends with the future Enlargement of the Spiritual Kingdom of *Christ*; the former of these being indeed a Figure only, or Mystical Emblem of the latter, to which this Divine Promise chiefly referr'd, and in which it was finally and fully accomplish'd. *For the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In Thee shall all Nations be blessed.* The same Gal. iii.8, Promise was afterwards expressly renew'd to *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, but to none other of Gen. xxvi. the succeeding Patriarchs: and from *these* <sup>4</sup> Gen. xxviii. 18. alone, therefore, God took his *Title*, and vouchsafed to be call'd the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; because to *these* alone he had made the Promise of that *Seed*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, by being ingrafted into his Church, and becoming the Subjects of his Spiritual Kingdom.

Many Predictions of the same kind are to be met with in the *Psalms*, and the *Prophets*; particularly in *Isaiab.* His LXth Chapter,



SERM.  
IV.

Chapter, is nothing else but a Description of the glorious State of the Christian Church, upon the abundant Access of the *Gentiles*: and he closes that Prophecy as we have heard, with the *Text*, which in few Words comprizes the small Appearance the Gospel should make at first, the vast Increase it should afterwards receive, and the speedy manner in which it should take place. *A little one shall become a Thousand, and a small one a great Nation; I the Lord will hasten it in His time*: In the *Messiah's* time this great Event shall come to pass; and, when it begins, it shall be *hastened*; it shall proceed with an astonishing and irresistible Swiftness, until it be fulfill'd.

If then the victorious Progress of the Christian Faith be in itself a sufficient Evidence of its Divine Original; that Argument must needs be somewhat heightened and improv'd, by considering, that the Spirit of Prophecy had long before signify'd and promis'd this Success: for from the same Spirit, from which the

Pro

Prophecy came, the Completion of it afterwards proceeded. I add, SERM.  
IV.

3dly, That the Advantage, peculiar in this respect to Christianity, doth from hence also appear; in that the wondrous Success of the Gospel confirms the *Truth* of those *Miracles*, by which it is said to have been planted, and frees the Account of them from all possible Suspicion of Mistake, or Imposture.

The only way that Infidelity hath left, to escape the Force of the Argument drawn from Miracles, is, by denying the Truth of the Facts. How unreasonable and absurd a Plea this is, may be shewn many ways, particularly from hence: That they, who deny the Credibility of the Gospel-Miracles, must allow somewhat else, altogether as incredible; to wit, that the Gospel was propagated into all the Regions, and subdu'd all the Religions of the World, without Miracles which, considering the Meekness and Incompetency of the Instruments, that wrought

wrought this Effect, is itself a Miracle, and the greatest of Miracles \*.

In vain, therefore, do some Men reject the Account of the Miracles done by the Apostles, if they admit (and they cannot but admit) the Account of the extensive and swift Propagation of the Gospel by the Apostles means; for the one of these Accounts evidently confirms and establishes the other. The very Existence of the World is a Proof, that it was at first miraculously created; and so, even the Existence of the Christian Religion (as at present spread and profess'd in the World) is a Proof, that it was at first miraculously planted. For the second Creation by *Christ Jesus*, can no more be accounted for by Natural Causes, than the first; and carries in it

\* Πῶς, εἰ μὴ σημεῖα ἐποίησαν, ἔπειθον; εἰ μὴ ἐποίησαν, δεῖ δυνάμεις ἦν; εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐποίησαν, καὶ ἐκράτεον, αὐτοὶ θαυμαστότερον ἢ τὸ συμβᾶν. Chrys. in 1 Cor. cap. 1. Όταν λέγῃσι μὴ γενέσθαι σημεῖα, μείζονος αὐτῶν ἀπειρήσονται τὸ τοῦ μεγίστου σημείου, τὸ, χωρὶς σημείων, οἰκονομήν περὶ δυνάμειν ἅπασαν, καὶ δόξαν ἐπὶ τοῦ αἵματος καὶ ἀγαθμάτων ἀνθρώπων ἀληθεύσαν. Id. in Ag. cap. 1.



as evident Marks and Impressions of an **SERM**  
**Omnipotent Power.** **IV.**

Now this is such a Proof of the Reality of the Apostles Miracles, as is wanting to those wrought for the Establishment of the Law of *Moses*; the Authority of which stands solely on the Authority of External Testimony, and the Traditional Belief of the Jewish Nation: but we have no Internal Evidence of their Truth from the Nature and Reason of the Event. This way of Proof is particular to the Gospel-Miracles; the Account of which comes to us, not merely as Matter of Historical Truth, but as in itself demonstratively certain; because Miracles were necessary towards diffusing the Gospel in that speedy and effectual Manner, wherein it is confess'd to have been propagated. And, where an End cannot be obtain'd, without particular Means, the visible Accomplishment of the End is a sure Proof that those Means must have been employ'd, which were necessary towards attaining it. The Jewish Worship might possibly have been erected by *Moses*

Jesus in Canaan, though he had wrought no one Miracle to confirm it. The Christian Faith could not *possibly* have taken place in all the World, unless Miracles had made way for it: And the Truth, therefore, of the Gospel-Miracles, is doubly certain to us, both from the Authority of Testimony, and from the Reason of the Thing; which gives a mighty Advantage to them over those of *Moses*, and cuts off all possible Occasions and Pretences of Distrust from the Infidel, and the Gainfayer.

Thus much to shew, "How great  
"and how distinguishing an Advantage  
"it is to the Christian Institution, to  
"have been propagated after so swift  
"and unaccountable a manner, as we  
"find it was." It remains, that I should  
shew likewise,

"To what useful Ends and Purposes  
"this Consideration may be apply'd.

Three things there are, which we may plainly learn from it. For it enables us to give a clear Account.

1. Why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the utter Extermination of the *Jews* was delay'd till 40 Years after the Death of our Saviour.

2. Why Miracles ceas'd so soon in the Christian Church, when they were continu'd so long in that of the *Jews*; even as long at least as their first Temple lasted.

3. Why God did not suffer Human Learning, or the Civil Power to come in to the Support of Christianity; the one, till above a 100; the other, till 300 Years after our Saviour. And,

i. We may satisfy our selves, Why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the utter Extermination of the *Jewish* State, was delay'd till 40 Years after the Death of *Christ*.

One would think, that the *Jews* had compleatly fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquities



SERM.

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*Christ*, and made themselves in the most solemn manner answerable for the Guilt of it; and that they were even then grown ripe for Divine Vengeance. But our Saviour having Pray'd on the Cross for his Murtherers, the Merit of that Blood which they spilt, prevail'd with God to respite their Punishment for some time, and to leave them still farther room for Repentance. The Apostles, therefore, by an Express Order of our Lord, as an Antient Tradition informs us, carried in *Judea* and the neighbouring Countries, *Twelve Years* after his Ascent; Preaching the Gospel of Reconciliation to the *Jews*, and exhorting them to Repent, and be Baptiz'd, everyone of them, in the Name of Jesus, for the Remission of their Sins; particularly of that Great Sin they had committed in Crucifying the Lord of Life, which is mention'd, not only in the First, but in all the several Sermons Preach'd to them by St. Peter, St. Stephen, and St. Paul, whereof any Account is preserv'd to us in the Acts of the Apostles.

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These Applications proving fruitless, and the Twelve Years expiring, God commanded the Disciples to execute their Commission in its utmost extent; and to go *Teach and Baptize all Nations*; that the Faith of the *Gentiles* might be a Reproach to the *Jewish* Infidelity. And so indeed it was. For nothing could better illustrate the Infinite Goodness of God, and the incorrigible Perverseness of that People; than to observe, that the rest of the World flock'd in to the Obedience of Christ, as soon as the Apostles erected the Standard of the Cross, while the *Jews* still stood out Obstinate and Impenitent: The Rest of the World, I say; who had neither so immediate an Interest in the *Messiah*, as They; nor were so capable of discerning his Character, and the Time of his Coming; nor had any Share in the Guilt of spilling his Blood, which might excite them the more eagerly to lay hold of the Gospel-Pardon. Within less than *Thirty* Years, after the *Apostles* set out from *Jewry*, they made Profelytes every where; *Their Sound went into all the*

VOL. I. L Earth,

SERM. *Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of*  
 IV. *the World.* \* And now, therefore, God's

\* Rom. x. 18. Mercy to the Seed of *Abraham* being manifested in the most conspicuous manner, and their Infidelity being heightened by all possible Circumstances of Aggravation, He inflicted the Sentence of Excision, which he had before pronounc'd; but which could not be executed, till the Church of the *Gentiles*, which was to succeed that of the *Jews*, had taken sufficient Root in the World. *Haste thee,*

(said the destroying Angel to *Lot*) *escape to Zoar, for I cannot do any thing [in] Sodom]* till thou be come thither. \* And, in like manner, may the Spirit seem to have quickned the Industry of the *Apostles*, saying, "Haste Ye, spread the Doctrine of *Christ* every where; for, till that be done, I cannot pour out my Fury on *Jerusalem*." Thus had our Lord hid of self, a little before his Passion, declar'd

\* Matth. xxiv. 14. *This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be Preach'd in all the World, for a Witness unto all Nations; and then shall the End come;*



that is, the *End* of the *Jewish Polity*, **SERM.**  
and of the whole *Mosaic Dispensation*. **IV.**

A 2d Thing, we may learn from the  
swift manner in which the Gospel was  
propagated, is, to give our selves from  
thence an Account, why Miracles ceas'd  
so soon in the Christian Church, when  
they were continu'd so long in that of the  
*Jews*, even, as long at least as their first  
Temple stood.

The great Use of Miracles was, to  
confirm the Truth, and promote the  
Reception of the Gospel, at its first setting  
out. That Use ceasing, Miracles like-  
wise ceas'd; being gradually, and, in  
about an Age after the Ascent of Christ,  
almost totally withdrawn. For what  
St. Paul says expressly of *Tongues*, holds  
equally true of all other Supernatural  
Gifts and Powers, indulg'd to the first  
Promulgers of Christianity; they were  
Signs to those who believ'd not, not to  
those who believ'd.

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Indeed, since the Jewish Dispensation had receiv'd its Authority entirely from Miracles, it could not, without more and greater Miracles, be abolish'd. Since the Kingdom of Satan, and the Idolatrous Worship of the Heathen Gods, had been erected upon *false* and *lying* Wonders, *true* ones were necessary to overthrow it. But, as soon as the Cross of Christ had every where triumph'd in some measure over *Judaism* and *Paganism*, there was no need of a continu'd Series of Miracles, to compleat the Conquest, or to confirm the Faith of those who embrac'd Christianity. The manifest Reasonableness and Excellence of its Precepts, were of themselves sufficient to make it flourish still more and more, and baffle all remaining Opposition. Especially, since those, who were to live at the greatest Distance from the Miracles done in the Infancy of the Gospel, might be as clearly satisfy'd of the Truth of them, as they themselves had actually seen them, partly, from the Evangelic Writings, receiv'd early in all Christian Churches, and

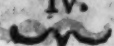
and, partly, from the Reason and Nature of the Thing itself; it being (as I have already shewn) altogether impossible, that, without Miracles, such a Degree of Success should have attended the first Preachers of the Gospel.

But now, as to the Law of Moses, the Case was quite otherwise: For, though it was usher'd in by Miracles, yet those Miracles being perform'd in the Desert, without any Witnesses, but what were of that Nation; and before a Race of Men, that were extinct, e'er the Jewish Worship was erected in Canaan; and the Account of those Miracles being contain'd in a Book, which was all along kept secret from the rest of the World; Infidelity found some Room, or Colour to suspect the Truth of them. Nor could it necessarily be infer'd from that Degree of Success which the Jewish Religion met with, that it *must* have sprang originally from Miracles. The Whole of that Religion consisted in Ceremonious Rites and Observances, which had no Intrinsic Goodness in them, nor any clear Marks or Characters



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Characters upon them of that Divine Authority by which they were commanded. Their *Typical* Use and Reference was little known to the *Jews* themselves, and could be less discern'd by those who were *Strangers to the Covenant of Promises*. In a word, the Law of *Moses*, as distinguished from all other Religious Institutions, had nothing in the Frame and Design of it, apt either to recommend it to its Professors, or to invite Profelytes. During such a Ceremonious State, it might be requisite for God, by frequent Manifestations of his Divine Power and Presence, to keep that backsliding People within the Bounds of their Duty, and procure Reverence to the Worship which he had set up, from the Idolatrous Nations around them: It might be requisite, I say, that he should, at fit Intervals, shew himself to be the Author of the Religion, and do New Miracles; to keep up the Credit and Influence of the Old ones. Miracles, therefore, continued in that Church for many Ages after its first Erection: For, besides the

which

which their several Prophets occasionally wrought, the immediate Appearance of God in the *Shechinah*, or Cloud of Glory, and his Answers by *Urim* and *Thummim*, were familiar, while the Tabernacle, and first Temple lasted; and even many of their *Laws*, (for Instance, the *Law of Jealousy*, those for the Attendance of the *Jews* at their *Three Great Festivals*, and for their Resting in the *Sabbatic Year*) were so contriv'd, as to be Demonstrative Proofs of the Immediate Interposition of God in the Affairs of that People. With good Reason, therefore, was a long Succession of Miracles indulg'd under that Dispensation: Not so, under the Gospel; which, after it was sufficiently establish'd, needed not New Signs and Wonders, to preserve, or promote the Belief of it; its Original Success being, as it were, a perpetual standing Miracle, of sufficient Force to convince its Divine Extraction, from the Beginning of Christianity to the End of

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S. A. M.  
IV.

## The Miraculous Propagation

3d Use, which, I thought, might be made of the Miraculous Manner of Propagating the Gospel, was, to give ourselves from thence an Account, Why God did not suffer *Human Learning*, or the *Civil Power* to come in to the Support of it; the One, till at least an Hundred; the other, till three Hundred Years after our Saviour. The Design of this Part of the Divine Conduct seems to have been, that the Establishment of our Faith might appear manifestly to be the Immediate Work of Heaven, and not owing to human Means, or any Set of Natural Causes. The Apostles themselves confess (and glory in confessing) that, as they Preach'd the Doctrine of Christ in the most simple, artless manner; and with Excellency of Speech, or the Enriching Words of Man's Wisdom; so the first Converts, whom their Labours brought over to the Faith, were generally Mean Persons, of no acquir'd Knowledge, no Rank, no Education. For, Not many Wise Men after the Flesh, nor many Mighty,



Mighty, not many Noble were call'd; but God chose the Foolish things of the World, to confound the Wise; and the Weak things of the World, to confound the things which were Mighty; and the Base things of the World, and the things which were despis'd did he chuse; yea and the things which were not, (such is the Less'ning Phrase of St. Paul) to bring to nought the things which were. \* The Reason of which Choice is plainly set down in the following Words; That no Flesh might glory in his Presence. He would have no Rivals, no Sharers in the Glory of this Event; and, therefore, produc'd it in such a manner, and by such unproportion'd Means, as to make it impossible for considering Men to mistake the true Author; so, as that all, who look'd on, should be ready to cry out, This is thy Hand, and thou, Lord, hast done it. †

\* 1 Cor. i.  
26, 27, 28.

† Psal. cix.  
27.

Indeed it was, on more Accounts than one, requisite, that Human Learning should not be admitted into the Christian Church, till it was sufficiently spread and settled. For, tho' the Use of Learning might from the

*The Miraculous Propagation*

the beginning, have been great, in order to confound the vain Sophistry, and wild Superstition of the *Greeks*, and to vindicate the Doctrine of *Christ* against all their Objections; yet great Inconveniences might also have redounded to the Faith by the means of it. For it must be confess'd, that, when Philosophers in after-times embrac'd our Religion, they blended it often with the peculiar Notions of those Sects in which they had been educated, and by that means, corrupted the Purity and Simplicity of the Christian Doctrine. Had this happened from the Beginning, such an Early Mixture of Philosophy with Christianity would have bid fair for an Universal Reception in succeeding Ages. But the Gospel being first, for an Age and more, purely and simply profess'd, there was no great danger of its suffering from the Subtleties and Refinements of Philosophy afterwards; because every Christian was then able to compare them with, and try them by, the plain Primitive Rule of Faith receiv'd till that time in all Churches; and might

might securely reject, or admit them, upon such a Comparison.

For these Reasons, the Learned and Wise of this World seem to have been overlook'd by God in the first Plantation of the Gospel; that neither its Success might be imputed to their Skill and Assistance, nor its Doctrine run the Risque of being blended early with their particular Opinions. However, still we may observe, that the Admission of Learning was long before the Admission of the Civil Power; because the former, having less Force and Influence than the latter towards procuring the Establishment of the Gospel, was, consequently, less liable to be suspected as the Cause of it. Let me add also, that, as the Powers of this World would have been mightier Instruments of advancing Christianity, than Human Learning could be, so would they have been more able, and more likely to corrupt it, and enervate the Force of it; as we find, that, not long after their coming into the Christian Church, they actually did: And therefore, on this Account



**SERM.** Account likewise was their Admission longer postpon'd. For near 300 Years after Christ, no Roman Emperor embrac'd the Faith; tho' they were (several of them) Men of great Moral Virtues, and not far from the Kingdom of God, as to their Personal Qualifications and Characters. Such, particularly, were *Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Adrian*, and the two *Antonines*. Yet it pleas'd the Divine Providence, that even these good Emperors, instead of embracing, and protecting the Christian Faith, should discourage and persecute it, that so the Kingdom of Christ, which was not of this World, might not be beholden to any of the Kingdoms of this World for its Establishment; but spread and fix itself every where, not only without the Aid of Princes, but against their Will; in spite of their fiercest Opposition, nay even by the means of it. The Kings of the Earth, and the Rulers took Counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed. He that sat in the Heavens laughed them to scorn, the Lord had them in derision. He set his King upon his holy Hill of Zion.

of the GOSPEL.

first; and then, gave him the Heathen for  
his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of  
the Earth for his Possession\*. Herod, and  
Pontius Pilate began this Opposition, (for  
thus hath St. Peter expressly apply'd the  
Prophecy †) and the Roman Emperors, † Acts iv.  
till Constantine, continu'd it. Neverthe- 27.  
less the Word of God went on, conquering  
to conquer; till it had subdu'd even  
these Subduers of the World to the Obedience  
of the Faith, and brought them to  
cast their Crowns before the Throne\* of the Rev. iv.  
Lamb, and to acknowledge, that the 10.  
Foolishness of God is wiser than Men, and  
the Weakness of God is stronger than Men,\* 1 Cor. i.  
even than the strongest, and the highest 25.  
among the Sons of Men. There was then  
a Christian Church, long before there were  
any Christian Princes; She did not grow  
up under Their Shadow, but receiv'd them  
into Her Bosom: And, as she subsisted for  
several Centuries, e'er the Civil Power  
came in to her, so will She endure for end-  
less Ages, when the Civil Power shall be  
no more; and even now, when she receives  
protection and Encouragement from it,  
yet

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yet is She in all the chief Functions and Operations of the Ministers of her Spiritual Kingdom, independent upon it. Thus did God order things, on purpose, that the Distinction of these several Societies, Offices, and Powers might be evident, and perpetually without Encroachment or Confusion, preserv'd: And, let no Man join together, what God hath thus put asunder! It remains that I should, under my

V.

Fifth and last General Head, briefly inquire into the Time when, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make suitable Reflections upon it, with regard both to those who lived then, when this Check was given to the Gospel, and to Us, who live now in the Latter Age of the World.

The plain Answer to the Enquiry propos'd, is, That the Miracle ceas'd, when the Civil Power began to declare openly in Behalf of Christianity; that is, soon after Constantine came to the Throne. For it was no longer a Wonder, that of

Religion



Religion should thrive and flourish; when, instead of bitter Persecutions it met with all manner of Encouragements. For a Century after *Constantine*, and upwards, the Number of Christians multiplied exceedingly in all the Parts of the World in which it had already been planted, and to which the Empire of the *Romans*, or their Influence, did extend. For above a Century after that, Christianity seems to have been at a stand; neither gaining much Ground, nor losing much, unless only in the Lives of its lukewarm Professors. But then it declin'd apace every day; Dissentions among Christians grew hot, and their Zeal for Religion waxed cold. The great Honours and Endowments, which Religious Princes had bestow'd on the Church, did too often occasion Ambition and Luxury in those who contended for them, or possess'd them. In a Word, all the Vices of Prosperity abounded, together with the Advantages of it: So that the Name of Christianity was no longer Venerable in the Eyes of Men; and its holy Doctrine

not



# The Miraculous Propagation

not producing an answerable Sanctity of Life, made no farther Impressions upon them. This unhappy Opportunity *Mahomet* laid hold of, to set up his Religion; which being (as I have said) suited to the Voluptuous Manners of the East, and seconded by the Power of the Sword, made large Inroads into Christendom, and tore away entire Provinces at once from the Profession of the Gospel. Since that time, Christianity seems to have been almost in a continual Decay: The *Hedges of this Vineyard of God* being broken down, all they that went by plucked off her Grapes; the *Wild-Boar of the Wood* did root it up, and the *wild Beast out of the Field* did devour it; \* till a Discovery of some unknown Parts of the World, open'd a new Way for enlarging the Bounds of Christ's Kingdom. The Zeal of some Devout Men, (tho' mix'd often with Private Interests and Designs) stirr'd them up to make use of this Advantage, and to Publish the Gospel of Christ in the remotest Corners of the East, whither, it is probable, none of the Apostles

\* Ps. lxxx.  
12, 13.

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regna  
mum t  
spatio,  
perio a  
utramq  
liam,  
Nigrun  
que hic  
lie mag  
que urb  
Cyprum  
Mede Co  
V o

ever came. There also Christianity (a <sup>SERM.</sup> corrupt and superstitious Christianity) <sup>IV.</sup> hath gotten footing. How long it may continue, and how far it may advance, is known to Him alone, *who hath determin'd the Times before appointed, (to Religions as well as Nations) and the Bounds of their Habitation.* † I shall not presume to enquire into it; but shall raise an Useful Reflection or two from what hath been observ'd on this Head, and with a short Application of it to our Selves, shall conclude this Discourse.

† Act. xvii.  
26.

The Imperfect Propagation of the Gospel, and the Prevalence of *Mahometism* over it, are some of the darkest Secrets of

Nulli unquam genti tam latè regnatum fuit, neque tam brevi temporis spatio unquam tot regiones, tot regna sub jugum missa. Incredibile dictu, verissimum tamen est, 80, aut non multo plurium annorum spatio, subjugarunt illi & Diabolico *Muhammedis* Imperio acquisiverunt Palæstinam, Syriam, Armeniam, utramque, totam fèrmè Asiam minorem, Persiam, Indiam, Ægyptum, Numidiam, Barbariam totam ad Nigrum usque fluvium, Lusitaniam, Hispaniam. Neque hic stetit illorum fortuna aut ambitio, donec & Italiae magnam quoque partem adjecerint, ad portas usque urbis Romæ; quin etiam Siciliam, Candiam, Cyprum, & reliquas maris Mediterranei insulas.

*Mede Comm. Apoc. Lib. 3. Tuba 5. p. 468.*



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Divine Providence. But the Causes that contributed to produce this great Revolution, are manifest: they were plainly the Vices and Discords of the Christians of those Times, that gave the Enemies of our Faith Courage to attack it, put Weapons into their Hands, and furnished them with all manner of Advantages against it. Christ came into the World on purpose to subdue the Power, and destroy the Kingdom of Satan. He display'd the Banner of his Cross, and summon'd all Nations to repair to it, who accordingly obey'd the Signal. But while the Extremest Parts of the Earth were meditating a Submission, while his greatest Enemies were hastening to put their Necks under his Feet, a stop was put to their Intentions, and his Triumphs, by the Mutinies and Desertions of his own Soldiers. Who can sufficiently deplore the Guile, and detest the Influence of those Vices which cut off so many Kingdoms at once from the Empire of Christ? not only arrested his Doctrine in its full Course, and said to

it, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further*, but made the Sun of Righteousness go backward, as it were, *ten Degrees*, and leave many Countries under gross Darkness, which had once been enlighten'd with the saving Truths of the Gospel? Certainly, Spiritual Faction and Pride, and Uncharitable Breaches of Christian Unity and Peace, are not such slight Offences as some Men are willing to think them; since it was owing in great measure to These, that the Universal Reign of *Christ* upon Earth was then hinder'd, and the Accomplishment of the Prophecies in that respect deferr'd to distant Ages.

Many Princes since, indiscreetly Pious, have made Attempts to regain the Ground, Christianity lost, by the Force of their Arms, and to plant the Faith anew in those Places, where it once had Possession, by the Points of their Swords. But (alas!) that great Work is to be accomplished, not by such *Holy Wars* as these; but by Conflicts of another kind, which we must maintain with our own Corrupt Habits,

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IV.



Matth. xi.

12.

2 Cor. x.



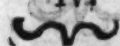
and Vicious Inclinations ; not by Foreign Acquisitions , but Domestick Victories over those Impieties of Christians, which gave the great Enemy of our Faith his first Advantages against it : For tho' the Kingdom of Heaven suffer violence, and the violent take it by force ; yet the Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual. When the Conversations of those that name the Name of Christ, become agreeable to the Purity of his Doctrine ; when the Divisions of *Christendom* are healed, and the Professors of our Holy Faith live together every where like Men of one Mind, in one House ; then shall the Sceptre of Christ's Kingdom extend itself to all the unconverted parts of the Earth, and not sooner.

That God, e'er the Day of Final Doom, will bring this about, the Scripture seems to say : but of the particular Time, at which he will effect it, we know no more than of That, in which he will come to Judgment. However, let us All, as far as lies in our Power, contribute to this Great Event, and prepare the way for it.

None



None of Us, I think, are now oblig'd to enter upon the *Mission*, and sacrifice our Lives, in order to spread the Gospel among *Mahometans* and *Heatbens*: I say, None of us, I think, are now oblig'd to it, as not being arm'd with the Power of *Miracles*, requisite for such an Attempt. However, without hazarding our Lives, much may be done by us, both at Home and Abroad, towards encouraging and promoting so good a Work. And let us not blame, much less deride those Good Men (though of another Communion) whose honest Zeal hath carried them yet farther. Let us rather mention with Honour the Names of as many of them, as we can reasonably suppose to have been led into this Design by sincere Motives of advancing the Glory of God, and the Salvations of Souls, without aiming at By-Ends, or any Temporal Advantages; and let us wish, that the Reformation had not undergone just Reproaches for its Backwardness to promote so glorious an Enterprize: an Omission, not easily to be excused in such Protestant Nations,

SERM.  
IV.Rom. xii.  
14.

as have greatly enlarg'd their Traffick and Wealth, by the Productions of those Countries, wherein many poor Ignorant Savages dwell, who want only to be instructed in the saving Knowledge of *Christ*, in order to embrace it. But, *how shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear, without a Preacher?* It might justly be expected, that Those, who *had been partakers of the Carnal things of these Gentiles*, should have *ministred unto them in Spiritual things*; that, after enriching themselves by the Spoils of those Provinces (which I know not what Right they had to invade, and conquer) they should at least have made them that charitable Return of planting the Gospel among them; a Work, of greater Importance, and Service to the Publick, than all their other *Plantations*.

But this is a Reflection, in which, perhaps few, if any, that hear me, are concern'd. To conclude, therefore, Let every One of us, in our several Places and Stations, do our best to promote the Kingdom

Kingdom of Christ within us, by pro-  
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 noting the Love and Practice of Evan-  
 gelical Purity and Holiness; and let us  
 likewise frequently put up our most ar-  
 dent Requests for the Enlargement of his  
 Visible Administration without us; be-  
 seeching God, in the Words of our Church,  
 that he would *please, of his Gracious  
 Goodness, shortly to accomplish the Num-  
 ber of his Elect, and to hasten the King-  
 dom of his Dear Son!*

*To Him, with the Father and the Ho-  
 ly Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Do-  
 minion, and Might, now and for  
 ever! Amen.*





of the Gospel  
 Kingdom of Christ within us  
 and the love and fellowship  
 of the Father, Incarnate of True Wisdom  
 and the Holy Spirit, who are  
 the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
 and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
 and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

# SE R M O N

Treatise between the  
 To him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit

# W H I T E H A L L

October 28. 1694.

P R O V. xiv. 6.

A Sermon Preach'd by Wm. Whitehall, and published  
 it not

It is the Will among the Children of Men, who speak, and about that which most nearly concerns Us, and He who understands, even the Method of raising True Will, it becomes us therefore

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A Score

It is the Will of Men, which most nearly concerns Us, and He who understands, even the Method of raising True Will, it becomes us therefore

*A Scornor Incapable of True Wisdom.*

A  
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

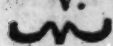
AT  
WHITE - HALL;

October 28. 1694.

PROV. xiv. 6.

*A Scornor seeketh Wisdom, and findeth  
it not.*

IT is the Wisest among the Children SERM.  
of Men, who speaks; and about That, v.  
which most nearly concerns Us, and He  
best understood, even the Method of at-  
taining True Wisdom; It becomes us,  
therefore,



therefore, to give the most fix'd and serious Attention, we can, to what he is saying.

*A Scorer*, saith he, *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.* Where we are, first, to enquire, Who it is, that is represented to us, under the Character of a *Scorer*, and, then, in what Sense he is said to *seek Wisdom*, but *not to find it.*

The *Scorer* is One, who is frequently mention'd in this Book of *Proverbs*, and against whom the Author of it hath levell'd no small Number of his Apophthegms, and wise Sayings. We find in the *Psalms*, and *Prophetick Writings* also, many Glances at him, many Complaints of him: so that the Nation of the *Jews* did, it seems, abound mightily with this Sort of Men; and they were a Great and Particular Grievance to the Followers of True Piety and Wisdom.

Their Character seems, in short, to have been This. They were Men, that with much ado, had made a shift to get rid of Good Principles, and such firm Opinions, as they found inconsistent with

a Loose



Loose Practice. As they had not any SERM.  
religion themselves, so their Way was V.  
to despise Those who had; to look down  
with Pity and Contempt upon a poor de-  
cayed Under-World; Beasts of Burthen  
that follow'd, in a Track, after their  
Leaders; Slaves to receiv'd Rules, and  
Precarious Opinions, to Foolish Empty  
Forms and Observances; but who never  
once reason'd freely, or thought for Them-  
selves. They were unfortunately fallen  
into a Time, when frequent Commotions  
happened in the *Jewish* State (as the Case  
remarkably was, in the Age before *Solo-*  
*mon* came to the Throne) and had seen  
several Sorts of Men uppermost, and, con-  
sequently, several Notions of things pre-  
vailing by Turns. This contributed  
mightily to unsettle their Thoughts, or  
(as they call'd it doubtless) to *enlarge*  
them; to create in them a slight Opinion  
of the Eternal Differences of Right and  
Wrong, Good and Evil; and to make  
them laugh at Those, who were Eager on  
any Side, or for any Cause whatsoever,  
which they did not get by. They

They evidently saw that Some, who sat up for greater Purity, and a Demurer Shew and Face of Religion than their Neighbours, were really Counterfeits, and meant nothing, at the bottom, but Their own Interest. And they wisely resolv'd, upon this, that All Religion was, like Theirs, a Convenient Trick and Pretence only; invented by Cunning Men to keep silly People in awe, to make Princes Reign safely, and the Priesthood Live easily. But as for Them, they knew better things than to fall in with the Herd, and to give themselves up to be ridden by the Tribe of Levi: the Poorest and most Contemptible Tribe of the Twelve, which had no Lot, no Inheritance among their Brethren; but liv'd upon the Cheat of Sacrifices and Offerings, and upon driving a Gainful Traffick for the Good Things of This World, here paid down to them, by promising and preaching up to Those they dealt with, a Recompence in a World to come.

Nor were these Men content to enjoy this Secret, which they had thus found

out,

out, quietly among themselves; but set  
up openly for Profelytes, and a Party;  
for running down all Religion, and for  
laughing Piety and Virtue out of Coun-  
tenance: so that a Good and Honest  
Man was sure to be their Mark, where-  
soever they found him; and they were  
ever shooting their Arrows against him, Ps. lxiiv.  
even Bitter Words. And this was come <sup>3.</sup>

to that pass, that the True Servants of  
God did almost sink under the Affliction;  
and did make it matter of Publick Re-  
quest to God in the Solemn Service of the  
Church, to be freed from it: --- Have mer- Ps. cxlii.  
cy upon us, O Lord; said They, have mer- <sup>3, 4.</sup>

cy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled  
with Contempt. Our Soul is exceedingly  
filled with the Scorning of Those that are at  
Ease, and with the Contempt of the Proud.

This is, in some measure, the Charac-  
ter of That Man, who, in the Language  
of the Text, is call'd *A Scorner*; and You  
see now, in what Sense he is said to *seek*  
*Wisdom*, but *not to find it*. For the mean-  
ing of these Expressions is plainly this;  
That He pretends to know more, and to  
see farther, than the rest of Mankind;  
to



SERM

V.

and to have shaken off the Prejudices of Education more thoroughly: He sets up for examining things to the bottom, without taking them upon Trust, or relying on the Authority of any Man. When God is pretended to have said in the Holy Writings, what wise and Good Men have said in all Ages; and Countries of the World, he is not much concern'd to know. To the *Oracles of Right Reason* he goes, (by Right Reason always meaning his Own), and from thence he enquires what he is to think, and to do, raises some Fanciful Scheme of things to himself; frames some particular Set of Opinions; and then rejoices in the mighty Discovery he hath made, and wonders at the rest of the World, that they do not fall in with it, and adore it. Now these Pretences, the Wise-man tells us, are vain, and these Searches are vain, he hath taken a great deal of pains, only to be out of the way, and to miss the mark which he aims at: *A Scornee seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.*

Having

Having thus largely open'd the Sense SERM.  
of the Text, I shall endeavour, in what V.  
follows, to justify the Truth of the Ob-  
servation contain'd in it, by shewing you,  
how it comes to pass, that the Men, who  
thus set up for a more than ordinary  
pitch of Wisdom and Sense, by Con-  
temning Religion, and Deriding the  
Professors of it, do always, and must al-  
ways, fail of the End which they pro-  
pose to themselves; since, whatever A-  
bilities they may have in Other matters,  
yet they are the most unqualified and in-  
capable, of all Men, to make impartial  
Inquiries after Divine Truth, and to  
discern between That and Error.

There are *Four* things, which particu-  
larly unfit a Man for such a Task, a ve-  
ry Proud, or a very Suspicious Temper;  
False Wit, or Sensuality. And These  
are the Chief and Prevailing Ingredients  
in the Composition of that Man, whom  
we call a *Scorner*. The Two Last do ge-  
nerally, and in most instances, belong to  
him: but the Two First are Essential to  
him, and inseparable from him.

*Pride*

SERM.

V.

*Pride* is that Ruling Quality which, of all others, seems to take the fastest Hold of him; *Proud and Haughty* Scorners in his Name, says *Solomon*, elsewhere. And

Prov. xxi.  
24

Prov. xxx.  
13. again, *There is a Generation, O how lofty are their Eyes! and their Eyelids lifted up!*

The truth is, there never was, nor ever can be a settled Contempt of Religious Principles, that is not built upon *Pride*, i. e. upon an undue Value, which a Man hath for himself, and for his own Opinion; and a Disregard for every thing besides: And therefore, the Author of (that Fantastical Book) the *Leviathan*, doth, at the very Entrance of it, very honestly, and in Terms confess, that he is a Man who *Loves his own Opinions*. And so doubtless, doth every Man too, who treads in His Steps, tho' he doth not own it so frankly, or perhaps know it so thoroughly. Indeed a Modest Humble Man can hardly bring himself once to think of shaking off common receiv'd Principles, and going against the United Wisdom of Mankind; or, if he should entertain, yet will he never venture to publish that Thought

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but will conceal it, as carefully as he <sup>S E R M.</sup>  
would his own Bosom Infirmity, or the <sup>V.</sup>  
Secret of his Friend. 'Tis the presump-  
tuous and proud Man alone, who dares  
to trample on those Truths, which the  
rest of the World reverence ; and can sit  
down quietly in the Assurance, that He  
alone is in the Right, and all Mankind  
beside in the Wrong.

Now, I say, as there is no one Qua-  
lity, that sticks more closely to a Scorn-  
er than that of Pride, so is there none that  
doth more evidently obstruct right Rea-  
soning, and an impartial Search after  
Truths of all kinds, especially those which  
relate to Virtue and Piety. And no  
wonder therefore, if on this Account,  
the Scorners, tho' he seek Wisdom, yet find-  
eth it not. Pride makes a Man seem suf-  
ficient in his own Eyes, for all manner of  
speculations and Enquiries ; and, there-  
fore, puts him indifferently upon the Pur-  
suit of all Knowledge, and the Determi-  
nation of all Doubts, without giving him  
leave to distrust himself in the least, or  
once to consider, which way his Genius

SERM. and Abilities lie. Hence it happens, that  
 V.  
 the Man, not being duly qualified for every Search, or, if he were, yet not having Leisure and Opportunity enough to go through with it, is fain to take up with slight and superficial Accounts of things; and then, what he wants in true Knowledge, to make up in downright Assurance. As soon as he hath touch'd on any Science, or Study, he immediately seems to himself to have master'd it; is as positive in his Opinions, and as hardy in his Assertions, as if the Thoughts of his whole Life had been directed that way only: Which is, as if a Coaster, who had gone from Port to Port only, should pretend to give a better Description of the Inland Parts of a Country, than those who have travell'd it all over. But this, I say, is the mischievous Nature of Pride; it makes a Man grasp at every thing, and, by Consequence, comprehend nothing effectually and throughly; and yet (which is worst of all) inclines him to despise and contradict those that do. It gives him just enough Understanding, to raise an Obje

ction

tion or a Doubt; but not enough to lay it: Which, as it is the meanest and most despicable, so it is also the most dangerous State of Mind a Man can be in; and by so much the more dangerous, as the Subject, upon which his Enquiries turn, is more important, and the Errors more fatal which he runs into, for want of a due Knowledge of it. He that is but half a Philosopher, is in Danger of being an Atheist; an Half-Physician is apt to turn Empiric; an Half-bred Man is conceited in his Address, and troublesome in his Conversation. Thus it is in all Matters of Speculation, or Practice; He that knows but a little of them, and is very confident of his own Strength, is more out of the way of true Knowledge, than if he knew nothing at all. Now there is, I say, a natural Tendency in Pride, towards putting a Man's Mind into such a Situation as this; and, therefore, it must needs be a Quality very opposite to the Search and Attainment of true Wisdom.



## SERM.

## V.

Prov.xiii.  
1.

And then, supposing a proud Man to be once in the Wrong, it is scarce possible that he should ever be set right again; he is plac'd above the reach of that great Means of Amendment, Reproof; *Scorner heareth not rebuke, says Solomon:* And, therefore, as his Pride led him into a Mistake at first, so will it be sure to keep him there; and to harden him in his way, against whatever wise Men can think, or say of him.

Thus, I say, is Pride an Enemy to the Knowledge of Truth in general; but most of all doth it hinder Men from discerning Sacred Truth, and the Doctrines of Reveal'd Religion. A proud Man is very hardly brought to digest the humble Duties of the Cross, or to admit a Belief of the Mysteries of Christianity: The one are too low for him, and he cannot stoop to the Practice of them; the other are too high for his Understanding, and he desires to be excus'd from entertaining any Proposition as true, which he doth not perfectly comprehend. If

can

cannot give himself a certain plain Account, in what Manner, and to what End God did a thing; he wisely resolves, that therefore he did it not at all. If he hath not as clear an Idea of every Term in an Article of Faith, as he hath of those in a Mathematical Proposition; 'tis presently unphilosophical, absurd, and foolish; invented by those, whose Interest it is to puzzle Mens Understandings, that they may have their Wills and Affections at their Service.

And this puts us in mind also of that *Second great Ingredient* in the Character of a Scornor, which we propos'd to consider; a strange and unreasonable Degree of *Suspicion*, by which he doubts of every thing he hears, and distrusts every Man he converses with; imagines the World to be all Cheat and Imposture; that there is no Sincerity, no Honesty any where; but that every Man is continually studying how to put a Trick upon his Neighbour. Without this Temper (it might be easily prov'd, that) a Man cannot bring himself to run down

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V.

Religion, and the Professors of it; and, with it, it is impossible, I think, to arrive at true Wisdom. Indeed, to be cautious, and upon our Guard, in receiving Doctrines, and not easily to give up our Assent to every Tale that is told us, is a Point of great Prudence, and very requisite, in such a Multiplicity of Opinions as there is in the World, to preserve us from Error. But then, we may carry this Point too far; we may be so scrupulous and circumspect in admitting the Testimonies of Men, as to reject some good Witnesses among several bad ones; and to deceive our selves oftentimes, for very fear of being deceiv'd by others. A general undistinguishing Suspicion is altogether as apt to mislead a Man, as a too easy and unwary Credulity. And to this Excess a Scornee is naturally inclin'd: He is so possess'd with the Notion of *Priestcraft*, and *Pious Frauds*, as to apply it indifferently to all Religions, and to every thing in Religion: He is so afraid of having his Understanding impos'd upon, in Matters of Faith, that he stands equally aloof from all Propositions



of that Kind, whether true or false: Which is, as if a Man should refuse to receive any Money at all, because there is a great deal goes about that is false and counterfeit; or resolve not to make a Friendship or Acquaintance with any Man, because many Men are not to be trusted. Certainly this is a very great Instance of Folly; and, in what Breast soever it harbours, cannot but indispose a Man extremely for the Study and Attainment of Religious Wisdom. An Extremity of Suspicion in an Enquirer after Truth, is like a raging Jealousy in an Husband, or a Friend; it leads a Man to turn all his Thoughts toward the ill-natur'd Side, and to put the worst Construction upon every thing; and (in Consequence of that) for once that he is really in the Right, in his Guesses and Censures, to be very often, and very much in the Wrong.

A Third Part of the Character of that Man whom we are describing, is, *False Wit*; or a Way of exposing Things sacred and serious, by passing a bold Jest  
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SERM.  
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upon them, and ridiculing Arguments, instead of confuting them. The very Name of a *Scorner* will tell us, that this is one of his most belov'd Accomplishments: And, I am sure, it is such an one, as can never help a Man to procure right Impressions of Things, and will scarce ever allow him to improve, or preserve them. Wit indeed, as it implies a certain uncommon Reach and Vivacity of Thought, is an excellent Talent; very fit to be employ'd in the Search of Truth, and very capable of assisting us to discern and embrace it: But in the Way in which the Scornee exerts it, the Way of Satyr and prophane Drollery, it betrays a Man into a thousand Errors, for one that it discovers to him. Men of quick and lively Parts are apt to give themselves a loose beyond plain Reason and common Sense; and to say many things not exactly right and true, in order to say somewhat new and surprizing. Their great Aim is, in general, *to please* and, in order to it, they must bend all their Wit that way, to which the corrupt Nature of Man is inclin'd, and be sure

always

always to speak *against* that which is up-  
permost; I mean, the Opinions that are  
most general and prevailing. This gives  
them a light and trifling, instead of a se-  
rious and manly Frame of Spirit; and  
makes them think, they have answer'd  
all the wisest Reasons that can be brought  
for any thing, if they have but clapp'd a  
*Nickname* upon it, and dress'd up a grave  
and venerable Truth in so odd a Disguise,  
as to raise Mirth and Laughter from it.  
Thus a late Person, eminent for Wit and  
Wickedness, till a Death-bed made him  
more serious, and gave him truer Appre-  
hensions of Things, us'd to please him-  
self mightily with this Thought, that  
the doing of a Miracle was only another  
Phrase for the *shewing of a Trick*: And  
having once represented the Thing to  
himself under such a light Image, he  
could hardly be brought to think reve-  
rently of it ever afterwards; or to allow  
the strongest Arguments which could be  
brought for the Truth of Miracles, a due  
and impartial Consideration. And thus  
also the great Leader of the Libertines of  
this Age (whom we have already had



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Occasion to mention), made sport with the Doctrine of the *Divinity* of Christ, by translating, after an absurd manner, the Greek Word *Λόγος*, (which St. *John* applies to him) and assuring us, that That Appellation given to our Saviour, was, in our Tongue, as much as to say, the *Verb of God*. And this vain and blasphemous Criticism he thought sufficient to overthrow a prime Article of the Christian Faith. In the same manner he pretended to ridicule the Doctrine of Grace, by enquiring into the Meaning of two Words, generally us'd by Divines concerning it, to wit, *Infusion* and *Inspiration*; and by informing us, that they signified, in plain *English*, *Inpowring* and *Inblowing*. I bring these Instances to show, how far a Scornee may be led out of the Way of Truth, by a little Knack of playing upon Things and Words, which he miscalls *Wit*; and upon which he shall value himself more, and be wiser in his own Conceit than *seven men that can render a reason*.

The

The *Fourth* and last Thing, from whence we propos'd to give an account of his Deceptions, was *Sensuality*: and whether this too doth not, for the most part, accompany a Contempt of Religion, I appeal to the Observation and Experience of every one that hears me. Look round the World, and you shall seldom find a Man loose in his Principles, who is not so likewise in Manners. There may possibly be, now and then in an Age, an Instance of some cold phlegmatick Man, that shall set up for overturning Religion and Morality, merely for the Sake of Contradiction, or to get himself a Name by it, without the Design of indulging his own Appetites in so doing: But this is a very rare Case; generally the *Scorners* are, as St. Peter and St. Jude have in their several Epistles agreed to describe them, *Men, who walk after their own Lusts*. Accordingly, we may observe, that this scorning Humour hath been most prevalent in those Ages of the World, in which the Love of Pleasure, and the Arts of Ease and Luxury did most

<sup>2</sup> Pet. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Jude 13.

SERM.  
V.

most abound ; and is commonly incident to Men, at that Time of their Lives, when their Lusts are most ungovern'd, and their Blood boils hottest. 'Tis chiefly the young robust Sinner that indulges himself in it, *whilst* he is in the midst of his Enjoyments : For tho' a Man may continue in the Practice of this impious Folly to the very End of his Life, yet the Habit it self is generally form'd much earlier.

Now the Sensual Man is, of all Men living, the most improper for Enquiries after Truth, and the least at Leisure for it. He is never sedate and cool ; and, therefore, not able to fix his Attention to a Point, and go through with it. He is never disinterested and impartial ; and, therefore, not capable of deliberating freely. He is already under the Dominion and Power of his own Lusts ; and perhaps likes to be so, and is very unwilling to shake off his Chains. Now such a Man, so qualified, is, no doubt, a very incompetent Judge of Divine Truth, and very unfit to consider the Pleas that

are



are brought for it. His Search into these <sup>SERM.</sup>  
<sup>V.</sup>  
 Things is like to be with no great Even-  
 ness and Fairness: How can it, when he  
 comes with strong Wishes, that he may  
 find it all a Mistake? Indeed, when a  
 Man allows himself in all Sorts of Im-  
 purities, and is determin'd to go on in  
 them; and yet finds himself under the  
 troublesome Restraint of Principles, and  
 the Dread of Religion, which hangs con-  
 tinually over him; the only way for him  
 to pursue his Enjoyments, and yet be  
 easy, is, to set his Face directly against  
 the Doctrines of Religion, that give him  
 any Check or Disturbance, and resolve to  
 get rid of them as soon as he can. And  
 he may put the Thoughts, which arise in  
 him upon this Occasion, together, and  
 make a Book of them, if he pleases;  
 and then tell us, that this is a sober En-  
 quiry after Truth, and a free Discussion  
 of the Point in Debate; but there is no-  
 thing of that in it: He thinks of Truth,  
 just as a Man doth of his Enemy, with  
 Spite and Anger, and a Design only of  
 finding out whatever may blast and ex-  
 pose it. This is a strange contumelious  
 way

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V.

way of treating Divine Things, and would tempt even a good Man to return the Affronts done to Virtue and Piety, by opening the Characters of those who do them; in which we should commonly find, that Sensuality and Looseness of Life had a very great and particular Share. But some Men, who write pretended *Histories of Religion*, are beholden to the real Religion of others, that their *Histories* are not written.

Thus have I run through those four several Properties, which remarkably belong to the Character of a *Scorner*; and shewn you, how each of them contributes to misinform and mislead him in his Pursuit of Wisdom; so that, supposing him really and in good Earnest to *seek* it, yet, thus setting out, and thus qualified, it is not at all probable that he should *find* it.

And now the plain and obvious Use we are to make of this Discourse, is, to satisfy our selves from hence, how it hath come to pass, that the True Religion, all

along, in the several Ages of the World, hath not been entertain'd by many of the seemingly Wittiest and Wifest among the Children of Men. To this startling Question we can now give a short and easy Answer, from the Observation of the Text, *They were Scorners*. They were either *Proud* and Opinionative Men, that could not endure to learn plain humble Lessons of Piety and Goodness, especially from such as they had no esteem of, no value for. Or their Minds were tainted with an ill-natur'd, and unreasonable *Suspicion*, which, from finding out some Cheats in Religion, led them to pronounce all Religion a Cheat. They had a Talent, perhaps, at *ridiculing* honest Rules and Maxims, and making Sport with Things sacred and serious; and, therefore, to have own'd any fix'd Scheme of Religious Principles, would have been a mighty Damp to their Imaginations, and have taken away from them the Subject of above half their Wit and Pleasantness. Or, lastly, They were Men of *sensual* and *impure Lives*, who were resolv'd to make their Opinions and  
their



SERM.  
V.

their Pleasures as consistent as they could; and who therefore were oblig'd, in point of Interest, to disbelieve every thing that made against them.

This is the short and true Account of the Matter; and will appear to be so, if we cast our Eyes backward on the Story of the World, and consider, who they have been, that have rejected the true Religion, all along from the Creation down to this Time.

In the Old World, *Noah*, who was the only Man that preserved the Worship of the true God in his Family, seems to have been an honest plain-hearted Man. Gen. vi. 9. *just and perfect in his generation*, (as he is describ'd in Scripture) *and walking with God*. The rest of the World are said to have eaten and drunken, to have married and been given in Marriage, i. e. they were Men, who liv'd in all the Enjoyments of Sense, who revell'd, and took their fill of all the good things of this World; and, to be sure, were very merry, and very bitter upon those that did

not. How did they deride that Grave  
Preacher of Righteousness, and his Pre-  
cise Family, when He and his Sons talk'd  
to them of Righteousness, Temperance  
and Judgment! especially, when he told  
them that there was such a Flood coming,  
and that he was building That Ark to  
preserve himself and his Household, what  
Jest was he to the Men of Parts and  
Pleasure! How many Scornful and Gay  
things were said upon this Occasion, while  
the Work went forward, by Those, who  
thought themselves very Wise, and Him  
very Foolish! But the Fountains of the  
great Deep were broken up, and the Win-  
dows of Heaven open'd; and Then they  
began to change their Opinions, when  
(alas) it was too late to learn.

In the next great Period after the  
Flood, the true Religion was confin'd to  
the single Nation of the *Jews*: and one  
may think it strange at first sight, that,  
if it were the True Religion, it should be  
confin'd; that the wise and knowing  
part of Mankind should not discern the  
length of the Evidence that was brought.

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V.

for the Divine Original of the Law of *Moses*, nor receive the God of *Israel* for Their God. But, if we consider a little farther, we shall be satisfied, that the true reason of Mens Infidelity, throughout this long Period of time, was, a Mean and Contemptuous Notion they had entertain'd of the *Jewish* People, and of their Rites and Ceremonies. The Wise Men of the *East*, in the Earliest Ages, and the Philosophers of the *West*, in Later Times, had too high an Opinion of themselves, and too low an one of that Little, Narrow-soul'd Superstitious Nation, to submit themselves to be taught by them. The *Jews* were a Proverb and a By-word to the rest of the World, the perpetual Subject of their Scorn and Reproach. And who can think (may we suppose one of those Wise Heathens to have said) that Truth should lie hid among such an odd sort of People, in such a little Spot of the World?

And thus, again, when Christianity first appear'd, it made no great Progress among the Disputers of this World,



among the Men of Wit and Subtlety, for SERM.  
V.  
this very Reason ; *because* they were Scor-  
ners. The Gospel was to the *Jews* (to  
the most Learned and Proud Sect among  
the *Jews* the *Pharisees*) a *stumbling-block* ; 1 Cor. 1.  
and to those of higher Repute among <sup>23.</sup>  
the *Greeks*, *foolishness*. The great Pre-  
tenders to Knowledge every where unani-  
mously contemn'd and derided it, as a  
poor and low System of Principles ; and  
could never once think of humbling their  
Minds, to entertain the Simplicity of the  
Gospel.

How should the Great Lords of the  
Earth, who swarm in all the Delights of  
Sense, and thought themselves born to  
enjoy them, submit to be talk'd out of  
their Pleasures and their Privileges by a  
few Ignorant Fishermen, and Tent-  
makers ? The Story of the Propagation  
of the Gospel in *Jewry*, might perhaps  
make a part of the Conversation in the  
court of *Tiberius* ; it was, probably, such  
Subject of Discourse to Them, as the  
*quietists* in *Italy* were to Us, at their first  
appearing. The Novelty of the thing  
O 2 might

SERM.  
V.

might occasion some Reflections, and Enquiries: but it was not to be expected, that Men of Pleasure and Parts should give themselves the Trouble of Examining nicely into the Pretensions with which this New Religion set up, or of considering, in good Earnest, whether they ought to become Profelytes to it.

We are not to wonder, therefore, if, in some Ages after Christianity, we find not much said to the Advantage of it, in the Writings of those Eminent *Greeks* and *Romans*, who are allow'd to have been the best Masters of Polite Thought and Expression. Alas! *Porphyry* must have been contented to confess the Vanity of Philosophy, and *Lucian* must in great measure have foregone his Skill in Satyr. The Witty Libertines of those Times must have parted with much of the Esteem they had, and with most of their Pleasures, if they had once admitted the Truth of Christianity: and, therefore they agreed in running down the Reputation of That, lest they should lose their Own.

And, as it was immediately after our Saviour's coming, so hath it been ever since, to this very day. The Doctrines of the Cross have never in any Age met, nor will they ever in any future Age meet with a kind and hearty Reception, among Those, who sit in the Seat of the Scorners.

But let us not therefore be dejected, because there are Many, whom the World esteems, who yet esteem not Us, and our Holy and Undeiled Religion! Neither let us suspect our selves, as being out of the way and impos'd upon, because Men of a greater Reach perhaps, and of a more improv'd Understanding than We, are not of our Mind. Solomon, who was certainly a Man of Understanding, and who was of our Mind, doth, in a very few Words (which I cannot repeat too often) afford us a full and comfortable Solution of the Case; *A Scornee* (saith he) *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.*





From the Account of former Times it appears to us, that thus it always *batb been*; and from reflections on the Nature of Man, that thus it necessarily *must be*; and, therefore, let us possess our Souls in Patience and Peace; and go on in the plain Paths of Godliness and Honesty, without Turning to the Right, or to the Left, for whatever Men scornfully witty can say of us, or to us,

Prov. iii.  
34.

Let us beg of Him, *who scorneth the Scorners, but giveth Grace unto the Lowly*, let us beg of him to Bestow on us, to Preserve, and Increase in us that *serious and humble* Frame of Spirit, which alone can qualify us for a Right Apprehension of the Truths and Mysteries of the Gospel; and which is, therefore, certainly Preferable to all other Endowments of Mind, however the World may have mis-plac'd the greatest part of its Esteem upon them.

And let us, in order to this end, frequently take to our selves the humble

ble Words of the Son of Syrach, and SERM. V.  
 say ; O Lord, Father and God of my  
 Life, give me not a proud Look; but turn Ecclus. xxiii. 4.  
 away from thy Servant always an haughty, 6.

Mind! Turn away from me vain Hopes  
 and Concupiscence, and thou shalt hold him  
 up that is desirous always to serve thee!  
 Let not the Greediness of the Belly, nor  
 Lust of the Flesh take hold of me ; and  
 give not over Me thy Servant to an Im-  
 pudent Mind !

And as for those who contemn Us,  
 and our Narrow Principles, and who  
 make us their Derision daily, let us  
 (in the Words of the Apostle ) not cease Eph. i. 16, 17, 18.  
 to make mention of them in our Prayers,  
 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 the Father of Glory, may give unto them  
 the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation to  
 the Acknowledgment of him : The Eyes of  
 their Understanding being enlightned, that  
 they may know, what is the Hope of his  
 Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory  
 of his Inheritance in the Saints,

the Words of the Son of David

Life and the Son of David

the Son of David

the Son of David

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# DISCOURSE

Occasion'd by the

## DEATH

Of the Right Honourable

The Lady CUTTS.

A. D. MDCXCVIII.

ECCLES. vii. 2.

*It is better to go to the House of Mourning,  
than to go to the House of Feasting:  
for that is the End of all Men; and  
the Living will lay it to Heart.*



THE first Step towards Happiness is, to correct our false Opinions concerning it, by learning to esteem every thing, not according to that Rate and Value, which the World, or our own mistaken Imaginations

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VI.

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VI.

nations may have plac'd upon it, but according to that which in it self, and in the accounts of right Reason and Religion, it really bears.

The Preacher therefore hath, in this Chapter, laid together a Set of Religious Paradoxes; which, however they may startle and shock us a little, upon the first hearing, yet, when closely examin'd, will appear to be clear unquestionable Truths, by which the whole course of our Lives ought to be steer'd and govern'd.

In the first Verse of this Chapter (the Verse before the Text) he tells us, that *a Good Name is better than precious Ointment, and the Day of one's Death than the Day of one's Birth.* *A Good Name is better than precious Ointment; i. e.* rich Oils, and sweet Odors, (in the use of which the People of the *East* much delighted) are not half so grateful, or valuable, as a good Reputation, well founded: This is more truly fragrant, more diffusive of its influence, more durable: it gives  
a Man

Man greater comfort and refreshment, S E R M.  
while he is Living; and preserves him, VL  
when Dead, better than the most precious Embalmings.

And agen, *The day of one's Death is better than the day of one's Birth; i. e. the day of the Death of such an one, as possesses and deserves a Good Name; of such an one, as hath liv'd well, and dy'd well, is preferable by far to the day of his Birth: for it gives him admittance into a State of perfect rest and tranquillity, of undisturb'd joy and happiness; whereas the Day of his Birth was only an Inlet into a troublesome World, and the beginning of sorrows.*

And then it follows, very naturally, in the words of the Text, that *It is better also to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting.* As Death to a good Man is more advantageous than Life; so to a wise Man the Contemplation of the First is more desirable than all the Enjoyments of the Latter: He had much rather be present



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VI.

sent at the sad Solemnities of a Funeral, than partake of those Festival Rejoycings, which are usual in all Nations, but especially among the *Jews*, at the Birth of a Child.

Hard Doctrine this, to the Men of Liberty and Pleasure! who have said to themselves, *Come on, let us enjoy the things that are present, let us fill our selves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no Flower of the Spring pass by us; let us crown our selves with Rose-buds before they be wither'd*: Hard Doctrine, I say, it is to such Men as these; and which will run the hazard of not being entertain'd by them. The Wise Man therefore hath condescended to prove, as well as assert it, and to back the severe Rule, he hath lay'd down, with very convincing Reasons: *for that, saith he, is the End of all men, and the Living will lay it to heart.* As if he had said, This Dark and Melancholly State it will one day certainly come to Our share to try; and what must sometime or other be undergone, ought to be consider'd beforehand: this is *the End of*

men; and all Men therefore should have SERM.  
VI.  
their Eye and their Thoughts upon it. 

And then farther — We are most of us  
so immers'd in the Pleasures, and so  
taken up with the Follies of Life, that we  
need all methods of reducing our strag-  
ling Thoughts and Desires, and of giving  
our selves a serious Frame and Compo-  
sure of Mind : and of all Methods, this  
of repairing to the House of Mourning  
is best adapted to that Good End, and  
will soonest and most effectually bring it  
about; *The Living will lay it to heart.*

I have largely explain'd the Connexion  
and Meaning of the Words, which have  
been pitched upon to employ Your  
Thoughts on this mournful Occasion.  
The next thing should be, to excite You  
to a compliance with the Direction there  
given, by the particular Arguments sug-  
gested in the Text, and by several other  
powerful and moving Considerations :  
to prove to You, the Folly and Emptiness  
of a Life led all in Mirth and Jollity, and  
Pleasure; the Wisdom and Reasonable-  
ness of shifting the Scene sometimes, of  
turning

SERM.  
VI.

turning the Gloomy side of things towards our selves, of exchanging the *House of Feasting for the House of Mourning*, and of making a discreet and decent use of those sad Opportunities of Reflection, which God, mercifully severe, is pleas'd to put into our Hands.

But I am prevented in this part of my Discourse, by the Pious Design of this present Assembly; You are already doing that which I should recommend to You from the Text; paying the Tribute of Your Tears to the Memory of One, whose Worth you knew, and whose Loss You sensibly feel; and bewailing Her, under the different Characters She bore of a Wife, a Daughter, a Relation, a Mistress, a Friend.

All, therefore, I have to do, on this occasion, is, to fall in with Your Pious Grief, already rais'd, and to bear a part in it, by dwelling together with You a while on the Character of that *Incomparable Lady*, whose Death we lament; by uniting, as well as I am able, the scatter'd

parts



parts of it, and recalling to Your Thoughts SERMON VI.  
at once the several Excellencies and Per-  
fections of which it was compos'd: which  
made her belov'd and reverenc'd by You  
while Living, and will make her Me-  
mory ever Dear and Desirable to You,  
now she is Dead; and which rais'd her  
above the greatest part of her Sex, much  
more than any Outward Marks of Rank  
and Distinction.

It is now, after her Decease, a fit time  
to speak of her in those Terms of Respect  
which she deserv'd: for in her Life-time  
she would not suffer it, and took some  
pains to avoid it; hiding as many of her  
Virtues as she could from Publick Obser-  
vation, and so behaving herself in the  
practice of those she could not hide, as  
shew'd, she had no mind to be told of  
them: discountenancing, as far as lay  
in her power, that odious and designing  
Flattery, which, through the wicked  
Fashion of an Insincere World, is now  
thought to be a kind of Customary Debt  
due to her Sex, and almost a necessary  
part of good Breeding:

But,

E R M.

VI.

But tho' the Living can seldom be prais'd with Decency, yet the Dead certainly often may; especially such of the Dead, as had a very unusual Degree of indifference and unconcernedness for what was said to their Advantage, while they were Living.

There is a publick Homage due to Desert, if we take a proper Season of paying it; and the Ministers of the Gospel, who are entrusted with so many Methods of promoting Piety in the World, are, among the rest, entrusted with This, of giving Honour where Honour is due; and of truly representing to the Minds of men such shining Patterns of Virtue, as are most likely to engage their Attention, and provoke their Imitation: It is our immediate and particular Employment to Praise God; and it doth, no doubt, in some measure also belong to us, to praise those that are Like him.

And now how shall I enter upon this fruitful Argument? What Particular of

her

her comprehensive Character shall I first chuse to insist on? Let us determine our selves to begin there, where she always began, at her Devotions. In These she was very Punctual and Regular: Morning and Evening came not up more constantly in their Course, than her stated Hours of Private Prayer; which she observ'd not formally, as a Task, but return'd to them always with desire, delight, and eagerness. She would on no occasion dispense with her self from paying this Duty; no Business, no common Accident of Life could divert her from it: She esteem'd it her great Honour and Happiness, to attend upon God; and she resolv'd to find Leisure for That, for whatever else she might want it.

How she behav'd her self in these Secret Transactions between God and her own Soul, is known to Him alone whom She worshipp'd: but, if we may guess at her Privacies by what was seen of her in Publick, we may be sure, that she was full of Humility, Devotion, and Fervency; for so she remarkably was always,  
P during



SERM.  
VI.

during the time of Divine Service. Her Behaviour was then very devout and solemn, and yet the most decent, easy, and unaffected, that could be; there was nothing in it either negligent and loose, or extravagant and strain'd: it was throughout such, as declar'd it self not to be the work of the Passions, but to flow from the Understanding, and from a clear knowledge of the true Grounds and Principles of that her Reasonable Service.

This Knowledge she attain'd by early Instructions, by much Reading, and Meditation, (to which she appear'd from her Childhood to be addicted) and, give me leave to add, by a very diligent and exact attendance on the Lessons of Piety which were utter'd from the Pulpit; which no one practis'd better, because no one delighted in, listen'd to, or consider'd more. For, at these Performances she was all Attention, all Ear; she kept her Heart fix'd and intent on its holy Work, by keeping her Eye from Wandring.

It was her Misfortune indeed, that the Exemplariness of her Behaviour call'd off the Eyes of several to observe it; but more Her, and Their Misfortune, that, when they had seen it, and satisfy'd their Curiosity, they did not go on also to imitate it. She often express'd her dissatisfaction at that Indecency of Carriage which universally prevails in our Churches; and wonder'd that They should be most careless of their Behaviour towards God, who are most scrupulously nice in exacting and paying all the little Decencies that are in use among Men.

When the Bread of Life was distributed, she was sure to be there, a devout and never-failing Communicant; and the strictness of her Attention, and the reverence of her Behaviour were, if it were possible, rais'd and improv'd on those Occasions: The lively Image of a crucify'd Saviour, then exhibited, could not but make very moving Impressions on a Mind that abounded with so much pious warmth and tenderness.

Books she took Pleasure in, and made good use of; chiefly Books of Divinity, and Devotion; which she studied, and relish'd above all others. History too had very often a Share in her reflections; and sometimes she look'd into pieces of pure Diversion and Amusement; whenever she found them written in such a way, as to be innocently entertaining. I need not tell You, to how narrow a choice she was, by this Means, confin'd.

But of all Books, the Book of God was That, in which she was most delighted and employ'd; and which was never, for any considerable time, out of her hands. No doubt, she knew, and felt the great use and sweet influence of it, in calming her Mind, and regulating her desires, and lifting up her Thoughts towards Heaven, in feeding and spreading that Holy Flame, which the Love of God had kindled in her Heart, and which she took care, by this means, to keep perpetually burning.



When she met with any thing there, or in any other pious Book, which would be of remarkable use to her in the conduct of her Life and Affairs, she trusted not her Memory with it; not even that excellent Memory, which she safely trusted with things of lesser moment; but immediately committed it to Writing. Many Observations of this kind she hath left, drawn from good Authors, but chiefly from those Sacred Pages; in collecting which, whether her Judgment, or her Piety had the largest share, it is not easy to say.

The Passages of Holy Writ which she took notice of, were indeed commonly such, as related either to the Concerns of her Spiritual Estate, or to Matters of Prudence: but it appears also that she spent some time in meditating on those places where the sublimest Points of Christian Doctrine are contain'd, and in possessing her self with a deep Sense of the wonderful Love of God towards us, manifested in the mysterious Work of our

Redemption; for she had something more than what, in the Language of this loose age, is call'd, *a Lady's Religion*. She endeavour'd to understand the great Articles of Faith, as well as to practise the good Rules of Life, contain'd in the Gospel; and she sensibly found, that the best way to excite her self to the Practice of the one, was to endeavour to understand the other.

And in this Book of God she was more particularly conversant on God's day; a Day ever held sacred by her, and which, therefore, always in her Family wore a Face of Devotion suitable to the Dignity of it. It was truly a Day of Rest to all under her Roof: her Servants were then dismiss'd from a good part of their attendance upon her, that they might be at Liberty to attend on their great Lord and Master, whom both She, and They, were equally bound to obey. There was such a Silence and Solemnity at that time observ'd by all about her, as might have become the *House of Mourning*; and yet so much Ease and Serenity visible in their

Look

Looks (at least in her Looks there was) SERM.  
as shew'd, that They, who were in the VI.  
*House of Feasting*, were not better satisfy'd.  
Thus did she prepare and dispose her self  
for the enjoyment of that perfect Rest,  
the celebration of that endless Sabbath,  
which she is now enter'd upon; thus did  
she practise beforehand upon Earth the  
Duties, the Devotions, the Customs, and  
Manners of Heaven.

To secure her proficiency in Virtue,  
she kept an exact Journal of her Life; in  
which was contain'd the History of all  
her Spiritual Affairs, and of the several  
Turns that happen'd in her Soul: a true,  
naked, impartial History! and yet, (which  
seldom happens in True ones) such an  
one, where the Person describ'd is not  
charg'd with many Blemishes and Fail-  
ings. Alas for Us, that the Thread of it  
was no longer continu'd!

In this Glass she every day dress'd her  
Mind, to this faithful Monitor she re-  
pair'd for advice and direction; com-  
par'd the past with the present, judg'd of



SER. M.  
VI.

what would be by what had been, observ'd nicely the several successive Degrees of Holiness she got, and of Human Infirmary she shook off; and trac'd every single step she took onward in her way towards Heaven.

One would have imagin'd, that so much Exactness and Severity in private should have affected a little her publick Actions and Discourses, and have slid insensibly into her Carriage; and yet nothing could be more free, simple, and natural. She had the Reality, without the Outside and Shew of strictness: all her Rules, all her Performances sat so well and graceful upon her, that they appear'd to be as much her Pleasure as her Duty; She was, in the midst of them, perfectly easy to her self, and a delight to all that were about her: ever Cheerful in her Behaviour, but withal ever Calm and Even; her satisfaction, like a deep untroubled Stream, ran on, without any of that Violence, or Noise, which sometimes the shallowest Pleasures do most abound in.

How

However, Chearful and Agreeable as SERM.  
VI.  
she was, yet she never carried her good Humour so far, as to smile at a Prophane, an Ill-natur'd, or an Unmannerly Jest; on the contrary, in her highest Mirth, it made her remarkably Grave and Serious. She had an extraordinary nicety of temper as to all the least approaches to faults of that kind, and shew'd a very quick and sensible concern at any thing, which she thought it did not become either Her to hear, or others to say.

True Piety, which consists chiefly in an Humility and Submission of mind towards God, is attended always with Humility and Goodness towards his Creatures; and so it was in this *Excellent Lady*. Never was there a more deep, and unfeign'd, and artless Lowliness of Mind seen in her Rank and Station: as far as she was plac'd above the most of the World, she convers'd as it were upon the level with all of them; and yet, when she stooped the lowest towards them, she took care even at that time, to preserve the respect that was due to her

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her from them. She had so much true Merit, that she was not afraid of being look'd into, and therefore durst be familiar: and the effect of that familiarity was, that, by being better known, she was more lov'd and valu'd. Not only No one of her Inferiors ever came uneasy from her, (as hath been said of some Great ones); but no one ever went uneasy to her: so assur'd were all beforehand of her sweetness of Temper, and obliging Reception! When she opened her Lips, Gracious Words always proceeded from thence, and *in her Tongue was the Law of Kindness*. Her Reservedness, and Love of Privacy, might possibly be misinterpreted sometimes for an Overvalue of her self, by those who did not know her; but the least degree of acquaintance made all those Suspicions vanish. For, tho' her Perfections both of Body and Mind were very extraordinary, yet she was the only Person that seem'd, without any endeavour to seem, insensible of them. She was, 'tis true, in as much danger of being Vain, as great Beauty, and a good Natural Wit could



could make her: but she had such an over balance of Discretion, that she was never in pain to have the one seen, or the other heard. Indeed, This was particular to her, and a very distinguishing part of her Character, that she never studied appearances, nor made any advances towards the Opinion of the World; being contented to *be* whatever was Good or Deserving, without endeavouring in the least to be *thought* so: and this, not out of any affected disregard to Publick Esteem, but meerly from a Modesty and Easiness of Nature, which made her give way to others, who were more willing to be observ'd. And yet she had also her Hours of Openness and Freedom, when her Soul eas'd it self to Familiars and Friends; and then *out of the good Treasure of her Heart* what *good things* did she *bring forth*? and with what delight was she listned to by those who had the Happiness to converse with her? So that a doubt it is, whether she were most to be admired for what she did, or for what she did not say. It was wonderful that One, who, when she pleas'd, could discourse

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so fitly and so freely, should yet chuse to be silent on so many occasions; and it was surprizing that She, who was such a Lover of Silence, should, whenever she spake, charm all that heard her.

We may be sure, that, while she thus commanded her Tongue, she kept as strict and watchful a Guard upon her Passions; those especially of the Rough and Troublesome kind, with which she was scarce ever seen to be disquieted. She knew not what the Disorders of Anger were, even on occasions that might seem to justify, if not to require it: as much as she hated Vice, she chose rather to look it out of countenance, than to be severe against it; and to win the bad over to the side of Virtue by her Example, than by her Rebukes.

Her sweet Deportment toward Those who were with her, could be outdone by nothing but her tenderness in relation to the Absent; whom she was sure to think, and speak as well of as was possible:

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and when their Character was plainly such, as could have no good Colours put upon it, yet she would shew her dislike of it no otherwise than by saying nothing of them. Neither her Good-nature, nor her Religion, neither her Civility, nor her Prudence, would suffer her to censure any one : She thought she had enough to do at home, in that way, without looking much abroad; and therefore turn'd the edge of all her reflections upon her self. Indeed she spar'd others as much as if she had been afraid of them, and her self as little, as if she had had many Faults that wanted mending : and yet, 'twas because she could, after the severest scrutiny, find no great harm in her self, that she could scarce be brought to suspect any in others.

Her Conversation might, for this reason, seem to want somewhat of that Salt and Smartness, which the ill-natur'd part of the World are so fond of ; a Want, that she could easily have supply'd, would her Principles have given her leave : but her settled opinion was, that the Good  
Name



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Name of any one was too nice and ferious a thing to be play'd with; and that it was a foolish kind of mirth, which, in order to divert some, hurt others. She could never bring her self to think, that the only thing which gave Life and Spirit to discourse, was, to have somebody's faults the subject of it; or, that the pleasure of a visit lay, in giving up the Company to one another's Sport and Malice, by turns. And if These are the chief marks of Wit and Good breeding, it must be confess'd that she had neither.

With all this Goodness, Gentleness, and Meekness of nature, she had at the same time a degree of Spirit and Firmness, unusual in her Sex; and was particularly observ'd to have a wonderful presence of mind in any accident of danger: for Innocence and Courage are nearly ally'd, and even in the softest Tempers, where the one of these is in perfection, there will and must be a good degree of the other.

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Shall I say any thing of that innate Modesty of Temper, and spotless Purity of Heart, which shone throughout her whole Life and Conversation? a Quality, so strictly requir'd of her Sex, that it may be thought not so properly commendable in any of them to have it, as infamous to want it. However, in the most common and ordinary Graces, there are uncommon Heights and Degrees; and it was the particular Happiness of this *Lady* Remarkably to excel in every Virtue that belong'd to her; even in those, in which Christians of the lowest Attainments do in some degree Excel.

Shall I add, that this love of Purity was the Cause, why she banish'd her self from those Publick Diversions of the Town, at which it was scarce possible to be present, without hearing somewhat that wounded chaste Ears; and for which, she thought, no amends could be made to Virtue by any Degree of Wit, or Humour, with which, perhaps, they might otherwise abound? These Good Qualities,

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ties, she knew, serv'd only to recommend the Poison, and make it palatable; and, therefore, she thought it a piece of service to other people, (who might perhaps be influenc'd by her Example) to stand off tho' she her self were secur'd from the Infection. This, questionless, was One reason of her allowing her self in those dangerous Entertainments so sparingly; but it was but One of Many: She had really neither Relish, nor Leisure for them; nor for a thousand other things, which the World miscals Pleasures. Not that she wanted naturally a Taste for any thing of this kind; for her Apprehension was fine, and her Wit very good, and very ready at Command, whenever she pleas'd to exercise it: but she had turn'd her thoughts so much towards things of Use and Importance, that matters of mere Pleasure grew flat and indifferent to her; She was so taken up with the care of improving her Understanding, and bettering her Life, in the discharge of the Offices necessary to her Rank, in the Duties of her Closet, and the Concerns of her Family, that,

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she found, at the foot of the account, but little time (and had less mind) to give in to those vain Amusements.

She did not think it (as, I fear, it is too often thought) the peculiar Happiness and Privilege of the Great, to have nothing to do; but took care to fill every Vacant Minute of her Life with some useful or innocent Employment. The several Hours of the Day had their peculiar business allotted to them, (whether it were Conversation, or Work, Reading, or Domestick Affairs) each of which came up orderly in its turn; and was, as the Wife man speaks, (to be sure, under Her management it was) *beautiful in its Season.*

And this Regularity of Hers, was free and natural, without Formality or Constraint; it was neither troublesome to Her, nor to those that were near her: when, therefore, any accident interven'd, it was interrupted at that time with as much ease as it was at other times practis'd: or among all her discretionary Rules,

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the chief was, to seem to have none; and to make those she had laid down to her self give way always to Circumstances and Occasions.

She wrought with her own hands often, when she could more profitably, and pleasingly have employ'd her time in Meditation, or Books: but she was willing to set an Example to those, who could not; and she took care, therefore, that her Example should be well follow'd by all that were under her immediate influence: for she knew well, that the description of a Good Wife and a Perfect Woman in the *Proverbs*, (a Description which she much delighted in, and often read) was spent chiefly in commending that Diligence by which *She looketh well to the ways of her Household, and eateth not the bread of Idleness*: and she knew likewise also, that the Person, whose words these are said to be, was no less a Woman than the Mother of King Lemuel.

Diligence, and Frugality are Sisters and She, therefore, who was so well acquainted

quainted with the one, was not likely to be a stranger to the other. She was strictly careful of her expences ; and yet knew how to be Generous and to abound, when the occasion requir'd it. But of all ways of good management, she lik'd That the worst which shuts our hands to the Poor ; towards whom she always shew'd her self very Compassionate and Charitable. Of the other delights, with which an high Fortune furnish'd her, she was almost insensible ; but on This account she valu'd it, that it gave her an opportunity of pursuing the several pleasures of Beneficence, and of tasting all the sweets of Well-doing. *She deliver'd the Poor that cry'd, and the Fatherless, and Him that had none to help him : the Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, and She caused the Widow's heart to sing.* Very easy, sure, will this make her Audit at the great day of account ; That Charity will, doubtless, be allow'd to screen her few Infirmities and faults, which is of Efficacy sufficient to *over the multitude of Sins.*



In the exercise of this, and of all other Virtues, She was wonderfully Secret; endeavouring to come up, as near as she could, to the Rule of *not letting her right hand know what her left hand did.* And this Secrecy of hers she manag'd so well, that some of the most remarkable Instances of her Goodness were not known, till after her death; no, not by Him, who was partaker of all her Joys and Sorrows.

Retirement and Privacy she always lov'd, and therefore chose it, when, after the Death of a near Relation, who had the Care of Educating Her, she was at Liberty to have liv'd otherwise. From that Time to her Marriage, which was more than Three Years, she hid her self in the Country; having an early and settled aversion to the Noise and Inconveniences of a Town-life; and too little an opinion of her self, to think, that it was so much the interest of Virtue and Religion, as it really was, that she should be known and distinguish'd.

When

When, afterwards, she went to Court, (as it was necessary for Her sometimes to do) she did it with an Air, which plainly shew'd, that she went to pay her Duty there, and not to delight her self in the Pomp and Glitter of that place. Had she gone thither soon enough, to see that *Good and Glorious Queen*, who was the Ornament of It, and of her Sex, she had been taken, we may presume, into her Intimacy: for their Minds were nearly ally'd, and their Characters, and Manners, and ways of Life not unlike; allowing for the difference of Stations.

I need not, I cannot well say more of her: and if, therefore, I have fallen short of her Character, (as I am sensible I have, in many parts of it, which are here mention'd, and in others, which are still left untouch'd) I desire, those particular Defects may be supply'd from this General Account; that she did not a little resemble *Her*, who was the Pattern of all that is Good and Amiable in Woman-kind.

Whether She had this excellent Pattern in her Eye, I am not able to say, when, soon after her Marriage, She declar'd to several Friends her thoughts, that Every Woman of Quality was as much more Oblig'd, as she was more Enabled than other Women, to do Good in the World; and that the shortest, and surest way of doing this was, to endeavour, by all means, to be as good a Christian, and as good a Wife, and as good a Friend, as was possible.

She endeavour'd to be all this, and she fell not far short of it: for she excell'd in all the Characters that belong'd to her, and was in a great measure equal to all the Obligations that she lay under: She was devout, without Superstition; strict, without Ill-humour; good-natur'd, without Weakness; chearful, without Levity; regular, without Affectation. She was, to her Husband, the best of Wives, the most agreeable of Companions, and most faithful of Friends; to her Servants, the best of Mistresses; to her Relations, ex-  
tremely



extremely respectful; to her Inferiors, very SERM.  
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obliging: and by all, that knew her  
either nearly, or at a distance, She was  
reckon'd, and confess'd to be one of the  
best of Women.

And yet all this Goodness, and all this  
Excellence, was bounded within the Com-  
pass of Eighteen Years, and as many  
Days: for no longer was she allow'd to  
live among us. She was snatch'd out of  
the World as soon almost as she had  
made her appearance in it; Like a Jewel  
of high price, just shewn a little, and then  
put up again; and We were depriv'd of  
her by that time We had learnt to value  
her. But Circles may be compleat, tho'  
small; the Perfection of Life doth not  
consist in the Length of it: if it did, Our  
Saviour to be sure, would not have dy'd  
so soon after Thirty.

Short as her Life was, She had time  
enough to adorn the several States of Vir-  
ginity and Marriage; and to experience  
the Sadness of a kind of Widowhood too:  
for such she accounted it, when her Lord

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was long absent from her ; mourn'd as much, and refus'd as much to be comforted, till his Return.

As her Life was short, so her Death was sudden ; She was call'd away in haste, and without any warning. One day she droop'd, and the next she dy'd ; nor was there the distance of many hours between her being very easy in this World, and very happy in another.

However, tho' She was seiz'd thus suddenly by Death, yet was She not surpriz'd ; for She was ever in preparation for it ; *her Loins girt*, (as the Scripture speaks) *and her Lamp ready trimm'd, and burning* : The moment almost that She was taken ill, she was just risen from her Knees, and had made an end of her Morning Devotions. And to such an One a sudden Death could be no misfortune. We pray, indeed, against it, because few, very few, are fit for it ; and the Church is to proportion her Forms to the Generality of Christians : But where a Good Soul is in perfect Readiness, there the sooner

the fatal Stroke is struck, the better; all Delays in this case, are uncomfortable to the Dying, as well as to those Friends who survive them.

In truth, she could not be call'd away more hastily, than she was willing to go. She had been us'd so much to have her *Conversation in Heaven*, and her Soul had been so often upon the wing thither, that it readily left its *Earthly Station* upon the least Notice from above; and took the very first opportunity of quitting her Body, without lingering, or expecting a second Summons. She stay'd no longer, after she was call'd, than to assure her Lord of her entire resignation to the Divine Will; and of her having no manner of uneasiness upon her Mind; and to take her Leave of him, with all the expressions of tenderness. When this was over, she had nothing more to do with her Senses; she sunk immediately under her Illness, and, after a short unquiet slumber, slept in peace.

Thus



Thus liv'd, and thus dy'd this Excellent Lady, whose Character I have so far represented, as my Time, and the Measure of such Discourses as these would suffer me ; and endeavour'd to renew a faint Image of her several Virtues and Perfections upon your Minds. I have done it in a confus'd manner, and without the nice Divisions of Art ; for Grief is not Methodical : it is enough, if I have been able to set before you some Resemblance of her, tho' I should not have done it after the best and liveliest manner : When the Life is gone, a Picture drawn even by an unskilful hand, hath its Use and Value ; and those who Lov'd what it doth (however unequally ) represent, will be touch'd at the sight of it.

You all are so, I question not ; touch'd by what hath been said, in various Manners, and in different Degrees, as Your Relation to her was nearer, or remoter ; as You knew more, or less of her. But You do not mourn alone ; many *Living* there are, that do now, and many more there

are,

are, who shall hereafter, when her Character hath spread it self, *lay it to heart.* 

The World hath had a Loss as well as You; True Virtue and Piety have suffer'd in her fall: And all, therefore, that have any Regard for These, shall bear a part with You in Your Sorrows.

The *True Servants of God* shall *lay it to heart*, who, from their Souls, desire the Increase of Religion and Goodness, and know the Power and Influence of so sweet, so winning, so perfect a Pattern as was set by Her; who promis'd Them-selves a mighty Countenance, and the World strange Advantages, from her Exemplary Sanctity and Goodness.

They that *Minister in holy things* will *lay it to heart*, to whom she repair'd, with so much constancy and seriousness, to hear the Divine Oracles explained by them, and to *enquire the Law at their mouths*. They will consider, what an Helper and Furtherer of their pious Labours they have lost; and how much more lifeless and ineffectual their Discourses

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courses are now likely to be, than they were heretofore, when she encouraged those Exercises by her presence, and taught others to attend, by the strict attention she her self paid to what was said in them. In whatever Congregation she appear'd, She secretly rais'd and improv'd the Devotions of the Place; Every Day of her Life preach'd up Goodness as effectually, as the most rational and moving Sermon.

The *Enquirers into the Methods and Mysteries of Divine Providence* will lay it to heart. Why, will they say, when God hath most Work to do in the World, is one of the best and most faithful Instruments of his Glory call'd out of it? Why, is she snatch'd away from us, at a Time when we could least have spar'd her? when Iniquity and Irreligion run high, and Piety is in danger of growing out of Fashion, and out of Countenance? Why, in such a Juncture, is this *Good Lady* taken? and, why are so many of her Sex, so unlike her, left? Is it in Mercy to Her, or in Judgment to Us? Is it

because



because She was too good to live here, or  
because We were too wicked to deserve  
her company? *Righteous art Thou, O*  
*Lord, when we plead with Thee : yet let*  
*Us talk with Thee of thy Judgments !*

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Her *Domesticks* will lay it to heart, whom  
She shone upon always with a singular  
Goodness; who were near Witnesses of  
her most retir'd Graces and Virtues; and  
had the best opportunities of forming  
themselves upon her admirable Model:  
and who will now (alas!) be destitute  
of her Example, and Encouragement;  
of her sweet Advice, and gentle Reproofs;  
and will be left to live upon that Stock of  
Virtue, which hath been happily laid in  
by them, that Measure of Goodness which  
They have already deriv'd, from attend-  
ing and observing Her.

Finally, the *Poor* will lay it to heart,  
whose Bowels she refresh'd, and whose  
Wants she reliev'd; and was ever their  
sure Refuge and Support, their Kind and  
Merciful Patroness and Friend.

But,

But, above all, her *Relations* will lay it to heart; Those, to whom she was most nearly join'd by Blood, or Love; and who had a more particular Interest in all her Virtues: They will lay their hands on their Breasts, *in the Day of Adversity*, and consider; how have we offended, that we are thus grievously punished? and which of Our miscarriages is it, that this heavy infliction is intended to reform?

This is the wisest and best Use that can be made of such Solemnities as these; not, by the means of them, to excite our truly pious and Christian Grief to an immoderate and unchristian Degree, nor to sorrow as *Men without hope*; but to take Occasion from thence, to search and enquire into our selves; to learn the meaning of these Divine Admonitions; and, after we have interpreted them truly, to resolve upon obeying them.

The Deceas'd Person, whose Loss we deplore, is Happy without Question: Happy will the Living be also, if they

thus

thus wisely, thus effectually lay it to heart ! S E R M.

It is better, doubtless, to go into the House  
of Mourning, than into the House of Feast-

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ing; but upon this condition, that we  
come better out of the one, than out of  
the other: that we leave our Vanities  
and our Vices behind us; that we lay  
aside our Affections towards this World,  
and our Indifference towards another;  
that we put on holy and hearty Resolu-  
tions of being even Now, what we shall  
wish we had been, Hereafter, when the  
Fatal Hour approaches; and of *living the*  
*Life* of this *Righteous* Person, that we  
may *die her Death* too; and be remem-  
ber'd and lamented, as she is, by those  
who survive us.

Let us assure our selves, that the best  
way of doing honour to her Memory will  
be, by making her Character still live in  
Our Lives and Actions; that the truest in-  
stance of our Love and Esteem of Her is,  
to endeavour to be Like Her: for Thus,  
we shall even add some farther De-  
grees of Happiness and Honour to the vast  
Reward which she is already entitled  
to;



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to; and shall make the Crown of Glory, she is to wear, bright as it will be, yet brighter, in the Day of General Retribution: Till when, (it may be piously suppos'd) the Saints departed are not admitted to the *Fulness of Joy*, that, in the mean time, the Influence of their good Examples and good Deeds spreading far and wide, That too, when their Accounts are made up, may be taken into them; and the Fitness and Proportionableness of their exceeding great Recompence, then bestow'd, may be manifested in the Sight of Angels and Men.

Wherefore, *lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees!* Think not so much and so long on the incomparable Character of the Deceas'd, as to forget the true Use You are to make of this afflicting Accident; and to neglect those good Improvements under it, which the Wise and Kind Inflicter expects at Your Hands. You have paid Your last Respects to Her, be not now wanting to Your selves; but *Gird up the Loins of Your Mind*, and be Ye comforted!

That

The Consideration of what She was, which Afflicts You, should much rather Chear and Revive You : Had She not been so good a Woman, You would with more reason have bewail'd her. But, why should You continue to mourn for One, who is enter'd upon a state of unspeakable Joy ? Why should you be dejected at Her Advancement ?

She is gone to the place, where all Tears are wip'd from her Eyes ; where there is no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying : She is gone, and her Works have follow'd, and will follow her, to her Great and Endless Advantage. God grant that, when We also follow her, we may do it with as little Surprize, and as much Chearfulness !

*To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour,  
Adoration and Thanks, now,  
and for ever ! Amen.*

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of the Last CUTS

1. The Grounds of our Sin and  
which are You, the Church  
Gent and Revive You: Had she not  
been a good Woman, You would want  
more reason have bewail'd her: But  
with should you continue to mourn for  
One, who is enter'd upon a state of un-  
reversible Joy: Why should you be so?

How to Comfort the Mourner

She is gone to the place, where all Tears  
are wiped away: Where there is  
no more Death, nor sorrow, nor crying:  
She is gone, and her Works have follow'd  
her, to follow her, to her Great and  
Infinite Advantage. God grant that when  
we shall follow her, we may do it with  
the same surprise, and as much Chearfulness.

How, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
be assist'd, as it may be, all Ho-  
nour, Adoration and Thanks, now  
and for ever! Amen.



*The Wisdom of Providence manifested  
in the Revolutions of Government.*

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable  
House of Commons,

A T  
St. Margaret's Westminster,

May the 29th, 1701.

B E I N G  
The Anniversary for the Restoration of  
King CHARLES the Second.

EZEK. xxxvij. 3.

*And he said unto me, Son of Man, can  
these Bones live? And I answerd,  
O Lord God, thou knowest.*

THESE words are part of that Vi- S E R M.  
sion of the Valley of Bones, where- VII.  
in the Prophet Ezekiel doth, in a very

R 2

lofty

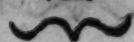
lofty and lively manner, set out the Lost and Hopeless state of *Israel*, then under Captivity ; and their future Recovery out of it, by the immediate Interposition of a Divine Power, contrary to all Human Probability and Appearance.

*The hand of the Lord was upon me*, (says he, at the Entrance of this Chapter) *and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of a Valley which was full of Bones*, i. e. the Spirit of God represented to my Imagination such a sight: *And (as he goes on) caused me to pass by them round about ; and, behold, there were Many in the open Valley, and, lo ! they were very Dry : i. e. they were as Numerous as the Dispers'd of Israel in the Plains of Mesopotamia, and as destitute of lively Juice and Moisture, as that Exil'd People were of all hopes of Returning. And he said unto me, Son of Man, can these Bones live ? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest : i. e. Thou, that art the Author and Bestower of Life, canst doubtless restore it also, if thou wilt, and when thou wilt ; but whether thou wilt please*

to restore it, or not, That Thou alone knowest. After which, the Spirit commands him to *Prophecy upon those Bones,* and to say, *O ye Dry Bones, hear the Word of the Lord,* together with what follows, in the two next Verses. And as I *prophefied* (continued he) *there was a noise,* and *behold a shaking ; and the bones came together, bone to his bone : And -- lo ! the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above : And, at last, the breath also came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great Army.* Where we have, in the Prophetick way, an Assurance given to the *Jews*, that, though their Polity was now dissolv'd, and their Tribes dispers'd, yet the time was coming, when the Providence of God would, in a wonderful manner, work out their Deliverance and Return ; re-unite the several parts of their shatter'd Frame, and make that People live together once again under their own Laws, and in their own Country. 'Tis true, this Vision hath, by some of the Ancients, been understood of the *General Resurrection* ; and by others,

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*The Wisdom of Providence manifested*

of the *General Restoration of the Jews*, before the Second Coming of Christ; and perhaps Both these Great Transactions might be glanc'd at in it, and remotely intended by it: For the Predictions of Scripture are generally so contriv'd, as to extend to more than One Event; so, as to be fulfill'd at several Times, by several Steps and Degrees of Accomplishment. However, That, which the Prophet had chiefly and most nearly in his View, was, the Recovery of the Jewish State from the Captivity which it then groan'd under; and to That therefore the Vision is, at the close of it, expressly applied: *Son of man, these Bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts: therefore, Prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

The words of the Text, therefore, when taken together with the other parts of

the Prophecy, to which they belong, carry in them this Consideration, "That  
" God doth sometimes interpose in be-  
" half of lost States and Kingdoms, and  
" delights to manifest his Power and  
" Providence, in retrieving them from  
" Ruin, when they are as incapable of  
" Restitution by all Human means, as  
" dead and dry Bones are of recovering  
" their Vital Juice, and being compact-  
" ed again into a living Body. A Sub-  
ject, fit every way to employ our  
Thoughts, at a Time, in which we are  
call'd upon to commemorate a *Revoluti-*  
*on*, as surprizing in its Manner, as happy  
in its Consequences, as full every way of  
Wonder, and of all the Marks of a Di-  
vine Contrivance, as any Age, or Coun-  
try, (even This Country it self, which  
hath experienc'd so many and great Vi-  
cissitudes) can shew; and which, tho'  
plac'd in our Annals at some Distance  
from us, cannot yet be forgotten by us,  
as long as we feel the Influence, and reap  
the Benefits of it; that is, as long as Re-  
publical Government, and the free use of Par-  
liaments, the profession of God's pure Re-  
ligion,

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ligion, and the Enjoyment of our Ancient Laws and Liberties shall continue among us : And, if it can be forgotten with the Loss of These only, there is no good English Man but will say, may the Memory of it always flourish !

Give me leave, therefore, to lay before you some Thoughts concerning the Wisdom of Divine Providence, in interposing so particularly to bring about these mighty unexpected Turns of State ; which it doth, doubtless, for many Wise Reasons, known only to that Infinite Mind which Steers the Course of such great Actions. However, some there are, that lie open even to our narrow Apprehensions. And

I. The Providence of God concerns itself in producing such surprizing Events in order to have its Influence on things below observ'd and acknowledg'd ; which would go near to be forgotten, did but not, by some remarkable Instances of his interposition in Human Affairs, raise Men up, at fit times, into a lively and vigorous Sense of it. Though we know, that w

Live



Live, Move, and have our Being in God, SER M.  
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that we are supported every moment by his Power, and conducted in all our Actions by his Unerring Wisdom and Goodness; yet the Impression which this Knowledge makes upon our Minds, is but faint, and is quickly effac'd. His Concurring Influences in this case are so secret, and so difficult to be distinguish'd from the working of Natural and Moral Causes, that we are too apt to rest in the Contemplation of these, without any recourse to those; and to resolve all that happens to us, in our Own Concerns, into the Power of such Principles as lie nearest to us. And, even in the greater and more Publick Transactions of the World, when they go on in such a manner, as to look like the effects of Human Foresight and Contrivance, we are apt to stop short in our Reflections upon them, without carrying our Thoughts up to that invisible Hand, which wields the vast Machine, and directs all it's Springs and Motions. *Since the fathers fell asleep,* 2 Pet. iii. *said the Scoffers in St. Peter, all things continue as they were;* and they were ready

to infer, therefore, that all things went on of themselves, without a Superior Power to Influence, or Controul them. But, when the great Scene of Government is shifted all at once, and the Causes, that Visibly contribute to the production of this Effect, bear no proportion to it; then we look out for others of a more extended Force; we perceive a Divine Providence interesting it self in our Affairs, and adore the footsteps of it. When these National Judgments, or Mercies of God, are *abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of it will learn righteousness*. And that Lesson of Divine Wisdom then learnt, will be apply'd by them to other Circumstances, and on far different Occasions. For, when once a true Principle of Piety, and of a Religious Dependance on God, is duly excited in us, it will operate beyond the particular Cause from whence it sprang, and give a general Turn and Tendency to all our Thoughts and Reflections; as One wise Rule of Behaviour, deeply imbib'd, will be useful to us in hundreds of Instances, and spread its Influence throughout the whole Course and Conduct of our Lives and Actions.

Since,

Since, therefore, we are so apt to forget God's Administration of the great Affairs below, when they go on evenly and regularly, he is pleas'd, I say, by Awakening Notices, now and then to put us in mind of it; to present to our view some astonishing Revolution of State, like a Glaring Comet, hung up in the Air, whose Extraordinary Appearance, and Irregular Motion, shall sooner lead our thoughts up to the Author of Nature, and imprint a deeper Awe of him upon our minds, than the sight of the whole Host of Heaven, in Orderly Array continually moving round us.

Indeed, since the Age of Miracles ceas'd, as it did, when the Testimony of the Gospel was fully Seal'd, the chief way, in which God hath been pleas'd to give Extraordinary Indications of his Power and Providence, hath been by such *signs of the times*, such Wonders of Government as these; which were not calculated, like other Miracles, for any particular Purpose, or Period; but have been



been in the World as long as Kingdoms and Nations have been, and are to last together with them. And this suggests to us also, a

2<sup>d</sup> Reason of God's interposing so remarkably, in the sudden Depressing or Advancing of Kingdoms and States, because this conduces to the Manifestation of his *Political* Justice, or of that Rule of Acting which he observes, as the Great Governor and Lord of the World, towards Publick Bodies and Communities of Men; and which is very different from that by which he Punishes the Sins or Rewards the Virtues of Private Persons. The Justice of his dealing with Particular Men may be manifested here or hereafter, as he thinks fit; for their Duration is Eternal: and should their Successful Crimes, or Unmerited Afflictions be wink'd at in this World, it suffices, if such Irregularities are set right in another. But, as to Societies, and Combinations of Men, which are of shorter date, another Rule must take place; they will at length be lost and

swallow'd up in the Kingdom of the Lamb, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, one People under one Lord, and Head, Christ Jesus: and, therefore, the Justice of God's Administration, in regard to such Communities, must be manifested either here, or not at all. For which Reason, I say, and that the Manifestation of it may be the more Glorious and Worthy of him, he sometimes turns about the Affairs and Fortunes of States in a very wonderful manner, and makes himself to be known to be the *most High, that ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men.* Dan. iv. 17.

And from this Notion of God's Governing, or Political Justice, we may give our selves some account why Temporal Felicities and Calamities are so often spoken of, and make such a Figure in the Writings of *Moses*, and the Prophets: For, under that Dispensation, God's Messengers address'd themselves to the *Jews* generally, as to a Nation, or civil Body of Men; and stirr'd them up to Virtue, therefore, or dehorted them from

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from Vice, by such Motives as were properly applicable to States and Communities. Whereas, in the Gospel, we meet but few Passages, or Instructions of this kind ; the Precepts of it being chiefly design'd to improve the Morals, and regulate the Behaviour of Private Persons, and to advance their Virtue to a degree of Perfection, answerable in some measure to the Gracious Discoveries there first imparted to them. But, as to the Conduct of Societies, or of particular Members in relation to them, little is said ; because the Doctrine of the Law and the Prophets, was so full in that Point, that there was no need of repeating Lessons, there so often inculcated, and no room for improving upon them.

For this Reason, among others, may we suppose, that the *Jews* were so remarkably separated from other Nations and kept so entire within themselves, by the express Commands of God, and by a Fence of many Peculiar Rites and Ceremonies ; and that the History of the

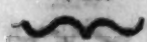
various



various and strange Vicissitudes they undergo, from their first Erection into a People, down to their final Excision, is so punctually registred and transmitted to us; that we might in Them, as in the Glass of Providence, (if I may so speak) distinctly see all the several Ways and Methods of God's dealing with great States and Kingdoms, and be fully instructed in the Rules of his raising, or depressing, prospering, or punishing them, by the Interposition of a Divine Power, as Visible almost as the Virtues, or Vices, that occasion'd it. But,

3dly. It may afford us a farther Account of those Unexpected Turns of State, and Deliverances, which the Arm of God brings to pass, if we consider of what Use they are, to baffle the mistaken Policy of Men, and to discover the Vanity and Emptiness of all those Preferences to a deep and consummate Wisdom, which the falsely-wise of this world please themselves in, and value themselves upon.

Men

Isa. x.  
13, 14.

Men of Ability and Experience in great Affairs, who have been long at the Helm, have hit oft, in their Conjectures upon things, and have been very Prosperous in many of their Projects, are apt at last to give themselves the Honour of all their Good Luck, and to grow vain upon it ; saying proudly in their Heart, according to the Elegant Expressions of *Isaiab*, *By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent ; and I have remov'd the Bounds of the People, and have robbed their Treasures, and I have put down their Inhabitants like a valiant Man. And my hand hath found, as a Nest, the Riches of the People ; and as one gathereth Eggs that are left, have I gathered all the Earth ; and there was none that moved the Wing, or opened the Mouth, or peeped.* Thus they adore the goodly Scheme, by which they brought all these things to pass, and reckon upon it as sure and infallible, for the future ; when, nevertheless, it hath this one Terrible Defect, that God is left out of it : and, therefore,

he

V o

he gives them often a Convincing Proof <sup>SERM.</sup>  
of the Folly of it, by unravelling all their <sup>VII.</sup>

Measures at once, and blasting all their Undertakings, and bringing about a New Scene of things, through unheeded, unsuspected Methods, which they could not foresee with all their Skill, nor prevent by all their Prudence; that so *the Wise Man* <sup>Jerem. ix.</sup>

*may learn, not to glory in his Wisdom, and* <sup>23, 24</sup>

*the Mighty Man not to glory in his Might;*

*but he that glorieth may glory in this, that*

*he understandeth, and knoweth Me; that*

*I am the Lord, which exercise loving Kind-*

*ness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the*

*Earth; for in these things I delight, saith*

*the Lord.* Were it not for such surprizing

Revolutions of Affairs, which disappoint

the Devices of these Crafty ones, and

make the Heads of the Ablest and most

Experienc'd Lookers on, giddy at the

sight, God would, in the opinion of ma-

ny of his Creatures, be shut out from the

Government of the World, and the Ho-

our of his Conduct would be devolv'd

upon some of the Mean and Subordinate

Instruments of it; those poor Insects,

that sit upon the Wheels of State, and



imagine themselves to be the Authors of  
all its Motions, and able to check, or to  
quicken them, at their Pleasure.

There is yet a (4th) good Use, to  
which these great National Changes are  
subservient, (those of them, especially,  
which carry a People at once from the  
extremity of Bad, to the Height of Good  
Fortune; such as That we are now Met  
to Commemorate) and it is this; That  
the Belief of them tends to create and  
encourage a *National Piety*, and a Publick  
Avow'd Dependence upon God, in the  
greatest Extremities. For, when once men  
are firmly persuaded, either from the Ex-  
perience of what They themselves have  
felt, or from the Assurance of what hath  
happen'd to Others, that no People can  
be reduc'd to such a wretched and forlorn  
Condition, but that the good Providence  
of God may, and will, if it sees fit, come  
in to their Rescue, and Deliver them  
even without Hope, and against Hope:  
say, when this Opinion is once fix'd in  
mens minds, it introduces presently a Pub-  
lick Face of Religion amongst them, and

common Endeavours of expressing their common Trust and Dependence upon God ; and it ties them together by the strictest Bands of Fraternal Love, Amity, and Union. Of this the *Jews* are a very Signal and Instructive Instance, under their several Captivities, and Dispersions ; where, tho' they were lost to all human hopes of recovery, yet, having an Assurance of the known Favour and Protection of God towards their State, they persisted, in the Strength of it, to wait for, and to expect their Deliverance ; and had, at those times, such a true Sincere Spirit of Piety stirring amongst them, such Zeal towards God, such Unanimity amongst themselves, as they were utterly strangers to, upon Other Occasions : Infomuch that They, who, when at home, under the free Enjoyment of their Temple-Worship, were prone to all manner of Idolatry ; when scattered into the Lands of Idols, where they had the Temptation ever near them, and before their Eyes, are observ'd never once to have comply'd with it. And this very Principle it is, that still supports and animates them, under this their Last and

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VII.

Greatest Dispersion, keeps them still rigidly addicted to their Rites, and closely combin'd among themselves, without mixing with any of the Nations among whom they dwell ; under the hopes, that God will, yet once more, as he hath often already done, make bare his Holy Arm in their Behalf, and restore the lost State of *Israel*. Nay, even We our selves, who are now met to Worship God, were very lately an Instance of the Efficacy of such persuasions as these, towards raising up a dissolute People into all the Heights of an Universal and Undissembled Piety. For when, in the Late Hour of Distress and Danger, our Constitution in Church and State was just Sinking under us, and the two greatest Evils that belong to Human Nature, the Oppression of our Liberties, and of our Consciences, were ready to overtake us, and no Human help, that we could Then see, was near : how yet did our Belief of the Overruling Power of God sustain us with the Hopes that he would, in some way, or other, own our Cause, support our sinking State, and work out Salvation for us

Am



And how were we wrought upon by this S E R M.  
Confidence, to turn to him with the Ut- VII.  
most Unanimity and Earnestness? What  
Zeal did we then express for the Pure  
Religion of Christ? What Reverence to-  
wards his Priests? What Love towards  
one another? What good Resolutions did  
we take up? What Solemn Vows did we  
make of living answerably to Our Holy  
Profession? and, I believe, sincerely meant  
(tho' by our Behaviour since, one would  
scarce think, we meant) to perform them?  
How were our Churches then fill'd with  
Crowds of Worshippers? Our Altars sur-  
rounded by unusual Numbers of Devout  
Communicants? How were all Ranks  
and Conditions of Men Then remarkable  
for their Piety and Seriousness; as re-  
markable as they are Now for their In-  
difference and Prophaneness? Doubtless,  
the Addresses we then made to God for  
Relief, were actuated and enliven'd by a  
reflection on the Surprizing Blessings of  
this Day; and we were encourag'd to  
hope that God, who had once before  
wonderfully restor'd our Constitution, even  
when it was lost, would be prevail'd with

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also, by a timely Application, to preserve it from Ruin. And methinks, therefore, our Latter Deliverance should not make the Former forgot ; when the One of these was the Foundation of our asking, and obtaining the Other. How know we, what Need we may Yet have of retreating to such Considerations, and fortifying our selves with a Reflection on such Encouraging Precedents as these ? And we do well, therefore, to Cherish the Memory of them.

That we may do so, give me leave, in compliance with the Design of this Day, and this Assembly, briefly to set before you, First, The Greatness and Extent of that Publick Blessing for which we think our selves oblig'd so long afterwards to pay our Publick Thanks ; and then (what my Text more particularly directs me to) the Extraordinary and Surprizing manner in which it was Convey'd to us.

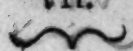
The Blessing was of it self Vast and Comprehensive ; for it took in all that was valuable and dear to us, either on a

Reli-

Religious, or Civil Account ; and reset-  
tled a ruin'd Church, and Kingdom on  
that Firm Basis, on which they stood, till  
Violent and Wicked Hands remov'd them ;  
and on which may they stand for Ever !

'Tis natural for Men to think that Go-  
vernment the Best, under which they drew  
their first Breath, and to propose it as a  
Model and a Standard for all Others. But,  
if any People upon Earth have a just Ti-  
tle thus to boast, 'tis We of this Island ;  
who enjoy a Constitution, wisely mould-  
ed, out of all the different Forms and  
Kinds of Civil Government, into such an  
Excellent and Happy Frame, as contains  
in it all the Advantages of those several  
Forms, without sharing deeply in any of  
their Great Inconveniences. A Consti-  
tution, nicely poiz'd between the Ex-  
tremes of too much Liberty, and too  
much Power ; the several Parts of it ha-  
ving a Proper Check upon each other,  
by the means of which they are all re-  
strain'd, or soon reduc'd, within their due  
Bounds : and yet the peculiar Powers,  
with which Each is separately invested,  
are sure always, in Dangerous Conjun-  
ctures,



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atures, to give way to the Common Good of the Whole. A Constitution, where the Prince is cloath'd with a Pre-rogative, that enables him to do all the good he hath a mind to ; and wants no degree of Authority, but what a Good Prince would not, and an Ill one ought not to have : Where he governs, tho' not Absolutely, yet Gloriously, because he governs Men, and not Slaves ; and is obey'd by them chearfully, because they know that, in obeying Him, they obey those Laws only which They themselves had a share in contriving. A Constitution, where the External Government of the Church is so closely interwoven with that of the State, and so exactly adapted to it, in all its parts, as that it can flourish only, when That flourishes ; and must, as it hath always hitherto done, decline, die, and revive with it. In a word, where the Interest of Prince and Subject, Priest and People, are perpetually the same ; and the only fatal Mistake, that ever happens in our Politicks, is, when they are thought to be divided.

It is objected indeed to this Admirable Model, that it is liable to frequent Struggles and Concussions within, from the several Interfering Parts of it : But this, which is reckon'd the Disease of our Constitution, may rather be thought a mark of its Soundness, and the chief security of its Continuance. For 'tis with Governments exactly contriv'd, as with Bodies of a nice Frame and Texture ; where, the Humours being evenly mix'd, every little change of the Proportion introduces a Disorder, and raises that Ferment which is necessary to bring all right again ; and which thus preserves the Health of the Whole, by giving early notice of whatever is noxious to any of the Parts : Whereas in Governments, as well as Bodies, of a coarser Make, the Disease doth often not begin to shew it self, till it hath infected the whole Mass, and is past a Cure ; and so, tho' they are disorder'd later, yet they are destroy'd much sooner. Accordingly we know that, under this Disadvantage, if it be one, our Constitution hath now lasted pretty Entire through

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through many Ages : for, excepting the short Interruptions which *Conquest* gave, (which, however, have not been either so Many, or so Great, as Some would make them) it hath continu'd much the Same, in the main Parts and Branches of it, from the Earliest Times of our *Saxon* Ancestors, down to these Days. A clear Proof, that it is a Government suited every way to our Temper, and to our Clime ; that it is perfectly made for Us, and We for It : and that God, therefore, never punishes us more sorely, than when he deprives us of it for a time ; nor ever confers a greater Blessing upon us, than when he restores it—

As he did on this happy Day ; when, after the Confusions of a Long Civil War, attended with the Destruction of an Excellent Church, the Murther of a Gracious Prince, and the Grievous Tyranny of our fellow Subjects, he was pleas'd at length to give us back again, what we had so lightly departed from, our Old *English* Government and Laws ; and, together with them, what we before boasted of in Name only,

the



the True Liberty of the Subject, and the SERM.  
VII.  
Real Freedom and Honour of Parliaments. 

And to this Day, therefore, we owe all the Benefits we have since reap'd from the Regal Administration, all the Peace, Plenty, and Happiness, we have enjoy'd, or our Posterity after us shall enjoy, under it.

To the Influence of this Day it is owing, that we have now at the Head of our Troops, and our Councils, a Prince, who hath happily join'd together the Extremes of Martial and Political Virtues; and knows as well how to Govern a Free People by their Own Laws and Customs, as to Command Legions: who, whether in the Cabinet, or in the Field, is still equally in his Sphere; and is always indifferent, therefore, either to War, or Peace, any farther than the One, or the Other, shall conduce to the Good of his People, and the General Interest of Mankind.

Nay, to this Day it is owing, That that Great Assembly before which I stand, are, under the Auspicious Conduct of our Prince, Arbi-

SERM.  
VII.

Arbiters of the Fate, and Governors of the Balance of *Europe* : That their Resolves have as wide an Influence, as the Firmest Leagues and Confederacies ; and their very Counsels are more Formidable than the Hostile Preparations of Others : So that They, who lately felt the weight of the *English* Arms, will be afraid of entring upon such Measures as may awaken Your Resolution of once again taking them up : saying within themselves, according to the Expressions of the Enlightned Patriarch ;

Gen. xlix. *Judab is a Lion's Whelp, he hath gone up from the Prey : He Stooped down, he Couched as a Lion, and as an Old Lion ; Who shall rouse him up ?*

The Blessing, therefore, we Commemorate, was Great ; and it was made yet greater by the Way in which God was pleas'd to convey it to us : for he did it in such a Manner, as to shew, that He was the Sole Author of it, and that it sprang not from Human Wit, or Contrivance. He did it, after our Forefathers were reduc'd to Extremities, and had tir'd themselves by Various Attempts to

bring this Great End about, and had been baffled in all of them, and sat down at last in despair of affecting it. Then was it time for him to appear for our Redemption, and to give Himself the Glory of it. All was Darkness about them, without Form, and void; when the Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of this Abyſs, and ſaid, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*: And both God and Man ſaw that *this Light was Good*; the One, rejoicing in his Own Gift; and the Other, blessing and magnifying the Bestower of it. 'Tis true, the Reasoners of this World, who love to solve every Event, without any Recourſe to a Divine Power, will be ready to point out ſeveral Cauſes, which help'd forward this End, and ſmooth'd the way towards it. But though there were many ſuch, yet muſt it be own'd, that All of them put together were not of Force enough to produce the Effect; nor, particularly, to account for that Universal Bent and Inclination of the People of all Ranks, Interests and Opinions, which, upon the firſt Opening of this wonderful Scene, at once diſcover'd it ſelf; and  
which



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which could proceed from Him alone, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand, and turneth them whithersoever he listeth.

Alas! when Man is to influence Man, in order to bring about such Mighty Changes as these, the Work goes on but slowly. 'Tis hard to Unite in any Common Measures all the several little Sects and Parties, into which a Nation is crumbled; their Interfering Interests, Passions, and Prejudices will obstruct the best-laid Design: what it gains in one Place, it will lose in another; and never, but by the Intervention of a Superior Power, succeed Universally. But when God once comes into such a Work, it ripens apace; all Obstructions presently cease, all Difficulties vanish. As the Tops of Corn bend this way, or that, before the Wind; so are the Various Minds of the Multitude sway'd and inclin'd by the Inward Breathings of his Spirit.

It is worth observing, therefore, in the Vision of *Ezekiel*, from whence my

Text

Text is drawn, how, even after the *Sermon* *SERM. VII.*  
*news and the Flesh were come up upon the*  
*Dry Bones, and the Skin had covered them*  
*above, yet still it is said, that there was*  
*no Breath in them; and still therefore the*  
*Prophet is commanded to Prophecy to the*  
*four Winds, and to bid them breathe up-*  
*on those slain, that they might live: and*  
*then, and not till then it was, that the*  
*Breath came into them, and they lived, and*  
*stood upon their Feet, an exceeding great*  
*Army.* The meaning of which is, that  
 in every sudden Revolution of State, tho'  
 there be many visible Dispositions and  
 Causes, that concur to favour it, yet still  
 the last Finishing Turn is always from God;  
 who animates and invigorates the whole  
 Design, puts all its Parts at once into Mo-  
 tion, and removes all Impediments.

Thus he effected the Deliverance of  
 this Day; by opening at once the Eyes  
 of a Deluded People, shewing them their  
 True Interest, and inspiring them with  
 Unanimity and Zeal to pursue it; and,  
 in order to it, allaying their Mutual  
 Heats, lessening their Prejudices, and  
 soft-

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Isa. xi. 6.

Numb.  
xxiii. 21,  
22, 23.

*softning their Aversions. The Wolf he made to dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard to lye down with the Kid ; that is, the most Opposite Tempers were brought to conspire peaceably in this Great Event, the most Divided Interests were reconcil'd in it: and even They, who were prepar'd to Prophecy against it, were yet, by an Over-ruling Influence, determin'd to pronounce a Blessing ; and forc'd, as they look'd on, to take up their Parable, and say ; God hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel ; the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. God hath brought them out of Egypt ; he hath, as it were, the strength of an Unicorn. Surely, there is no Incantment against Jacob, neither is there any Divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath God wrought ?*

Since the Work, therefore, was His, let us give Him the Praise of it! even as we do, by this Solemn Appearance : falling low on our Knees before his Foot-

stool,

Vol.



stool, and saying, *Not unto Us, O Lord,* SERM. VII.  
*not unto Us, nor unto our Forefathers, but*  
*unto Thy Name give Glory ; for thy Mercy,* Psal. cxv.  
*and for thy Truth's sake ! For thy Mercy's*  
*sake, which induc'd thee to give so happy*  
*a Turn to the Affairs of so Undeserving*  
*a People ; and for thy Truth's sake, which*  
*thou intendest to secure and to re-establish*  
*by the Means of it.*

Let us piously ascribe this, and all other  
our Deliverances to God, and all our Ca-  
lamities to our Selves ; acknowledging the  
One to be as properly the Consequence of  
our Sins, as the Other is the Result of his  
Unmerited Favour and Goodness. And let  
us from such surprizing Events as these,  
which have confessedly something Divine  
in them, learn to lift up our Thoughts  
above Material Causes, and to instruct our  
Selves in all the Amazing Lessons of God's  
Governing Providence ; by which he holds  
the Balance of Nations, and inclines it  
which way he pleases ; so that *all the In-* Dan. iv.  
*habitants of the Earth are reputed as no*  
*thing to him, and he doth according to his*  
*Will in the Army of Heaven, and among*  
VOL. I. T the

274 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested, &c.*  
SERM. VII. *the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can*  
*stay his Hand, or say unto him, What doest*  
*thou?*

Rev. v.  
12, 13.

And this he now performs by the Administration of the Man Christ *Jesus*; to whom, immediately upon his Resurrection, he gave all Power, in Heaven, and in Earth: and whom, upon his *Ascension* into Heaven, (the Holy Subject also of this Day's Solemnity) he instated in the full Possession and Exercise of that Power; declaring him King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. And, indeed, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing. Therefore, Blessing and Honour, and Glory and Power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!*

*The Duty of Publick Intercession and  
Thanksgiving for Princes.*

A

# S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

House of Commons,

A T

*St. Margaret's Westminster,*

On Wednesday, March 8. 1703.

B E I N G

The Day of Her MAJESTY's Happy  
Accession to the THRONE.

I TIM. ij. 1, 2, 3.

I Exhort, That, first of all, Supplications,  
Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks  
be made for all Men; for Kings, and all  
that are in Authority; that we may lead a  
Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness  
and Honesty: For this is Good and Accep-  
table in the sight of God, our Saviour.

THERE was nothing by which the SERM.  
VIII.  
Enemies of Christianity endea-  
our'd, and hop'd so much to retard the

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Pro-



SERM.  
VIII.

Progress of it, as by representing to Princes, and Rulers, that the Propagation of this Doctrine tended to subvert their Government; that the Spreaders of it, wherever they came, *exceedingly troubled Cities, and turn'd the World upside down.* It behov'd the Apostles, therefore, to guard against this Objection, with all imaginable Care. As they knew, that the great Work, in which they were employ'd, was not, as yet, to be promoted, or countenanc'd by the Powers of this World; so they resolv'd to give them no just Ground, or Colour to obstruct it: and wisely, therefore, took all Occasions to declare their Abhorrence of Such as *despis'd Dominion, and spake evil of Dignities*; frequently press'd upon their new Converts the Duties of paying *Honour, and Fear, and Tribute to the Higher Powers*, [as being *the Ordinance of God*] and of *submitting themselves to them, not only for Wrath but also for Conscience sake.* And, for this Reason, it may be presum'd that St. Paul introduceth his Instructions to Timothy the new Bishop of *Ephesus*, by *Exhorting him*, that, in order to a due Discharge

of his high Trust, he should *first of all*, or, above all things, take care, that *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men; especially for Kings, and all that are in Authority; that we may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and Honesty: for this, says he, is Good, and Acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour.*

The Exhortation hath a double Aspect, on Mankind in general, and on Princes and Rulers in particular. I shall consider it, with regard to the Latter of these only, for whose sake the Apostle seems chiefly to have made it; and, under this View, it suggests to us Three Heads of Discourse, very proper to be handled on this Day, and in this Assembly.

I. It recommends a great Duty to us, I.  
the Duty of *making Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions, and of giving Thanks, for Kings, and all that are in Authority.*

II. It expresses the general Reason, and II.  
Ground of that Duty: *For this is Good,*

278      *The Duty of Publick Intercession and*  
SER M.      *and Acceptable in the sight of God, our*  
VIII.      *Saviour.*

III.      III. It quickens us to the Exercise of it by a special Motive, drawn from the Consideration of our own Ease, Advantage, and Happiness ; *That we may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

These Points I shall first consider, and explain, in that Latitude, with which the Apostle hath propos'd them ; and then adapt the general Argument to the particular Occasion of this Day's joyful Solemnity.

I.      The Writers on this Place have distinguish'd with some Exactness between *Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions*, and endeavour'd to give us the strict and proper Sense of each of these Words ; which I think, it is neither necessary, nor easy to determine. Sure we are, that by all these together the Apostle intended to express the Petitionary Part of our Devotions ; and by *giving of Thanks*, the



other Part, which consists of Hymns and Praises. These Two comprise the whole of our Religious Service; and in both these ways we are exhorted to address our selves to God, *for Kings, and all that are in Authority*, i. e. for the Supreme Magistrate, and all Inferior and Subordinate Governors.

Ancient and Modern Interpreters agree to understand this Passage of the Publick Offices, or Devotions of the Church; and, indeed, the Episcopal Character of *Timothy*, to whom the Exhortation is address'd; the Instructions which immediately follow, and manifestly relate to the same Head of Publick Worship; and the profess'd Design of *St. Paul* in writing this Epistle, which was, to instruct *Timothy*, *How he ought to behave himself* <sup>1 Tim. iii. 15.</sup> *in the House of God*; do, I think, naturally, and necessarily determine us so to understand it: especially, if we consider, that the Exhortation, thus understood, was agreeable to the Practice of the Jewish Church; the Pattern, which, in Matters of Worship, Discipline, and Govern-

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VIII.

ment, the Apostles chiefly follow'd : and, accordingly, we find the Earliest Apologists for Christianity representing it as the Constant and Known Usage of the First Christians, in all their Sacred Assemblies, to Pray for the Lives of their Emperors, and for the Prosperity of their State and Government.

Our Church is in This, as in other Respects, truly Primitive ; for thus we pray daily in her Liturgy. And what we do every Day, we may, at some times, be allow'd to perform more devoutly and solemnly ; even as often as the Course of the Year shall bring on that Happy Day, when Her Majesty first began to Reign on the Throne of her Ancestors, and in the Hearts of her Subjects, and to refresh this Church, and State, with the kind Influences of her Mild and Gracious Administration. Whenever this Annual Season of Joy returns, a lively and affecting Sense of the Mercies it convey'd to us, cannot but return with it, which we have no better way of expressing, than by Offering up to God ( as now

we do, and are by St. Paul Exhorted to do ) our Devoutest Thanks for the Blessings we already feel, and our most earnest Prayers for the Continuance and Increase of them.

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The Reason and Ground of which Duty is thus, in the

Second place, express'd: *For this is Good and Acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour.* It is *Good*, i. e. highly Decent, Expedient, and reasonable in it self; and, therefore, *Acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour*, a Performance particularly well-pleasing to Him, by whom Kings Reign, of whose Power they partake, and whose *Image and Superscription* they bear. Let us take a distinct View of the several Springs, from whence our Obligation to this Duty may be suppos'd to arise. And,

II.

1st, Our Applications to God in behalf of the Princes and Rulers of this World are highly reasonable, as they are Proper Expressions of our Good-will to

I

Man-



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VIII.

and whose Welfare in great Measure depends upon their Actions and Conduct. Sovereign Princes, and States, are the Chief Instruments, which the Providence of God employs, in his Administrations here below, and by which he brings about all those Mighty Events, that fix, or unsettle the Peace of the World. When these great Wheels move irregularly, the whole Machine of State is presently render'd unserviceable, and numberless depending Motions are either stopp'd, or disorder'd.

The Execution of all Laws is entrusted with Them; and Laws are the Source of every Advantage that redounds to Mankind from Society, which, without them, would not be preferable to Solitude. To the Influence of These it is owing, that we can call any thing our Own, even Life it self; and are shelter'd from the Attacks, which the Lusts and Passions of Men, not restrain'd by the Principles of Reason and Religion, would be every Day making upon us; That we

are

are polish'd in our Manners, and bred up in all the Arts of Civil Life, which can render us Useful, or Agreeable to each other : and, chiefly, that we have Opportunities of thus appearing before God, and praising him in the Great Congregation ; of hearing his Everlasting Gospel expounded to us, and being directed in all those Paths of Piety and Virtue, which lead to Peace in this World, and to Everlasting Life in the next.

“ Of Law (said the excellent Mr. Hooker long since, with a Compass of Thought, and a Force of Words peculiar to him ; Of Law ) “ no less can be acknowledged, than that her Seat is in “ the Bosom of God ; her Voice, the “ Harmony of the World ; that all things “ in Heaven, and Earth, do her Homage ; “ the very Least, as feeling her Care, “ and the Greatest, as not exempt from “ her Power ; both Angels, and Men, “ and Creatures, of what kind soever, “ though Each, in different Sort and “ Manner, yet All, with one Uniform “ Consent, admiring her as the Mother  
“ of

SERM.

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“ of their Peace and Joy”. He, therefore, upon whose Authority, and Will, the Observation of Human Laws depends, hath the Happiness, or Misery of Mankind in his Power; *the Earth, and all the Inhabitants thereof*, would be dissolv'd, did not such Persons *bear up the Pillars of it.*

Psal. lxxv.  
3.

Nay, even the Examples of Princes is, it self, a Living Law to their Subjects, which fashions them by degrees into a Likeness of Manners, and spreads its Influence insensibly, but powerfully, through Cities, and Kingdoms.

So that, to make Supplications for Kings, that their Government may be Wise, Just, and Prosperous, is, to pray at once for all the Temporal Felicities which can accrue to us; a good Reign being the most Universal and Comprehensive Blessing, which either Man can ask, or God bestow; and for which we have as much Reason to be Thankful as for the Light of the Sun, for Temperate Weather, and Fruitful Seasons.

Even



Even an Ill Prince cannot help doing a great deal of Good, by preserving some degree of Order and Government in the World ; and, therefore, even Such an One hath a Title to our Prayers, and Thanksgivings. But, when Virtue ascends the Throne, it dispenses Blessings without Number, and without Measure ; and spreads its Influence on all around, and beneath it : *Its going forth* Psal. xix,  
*is from the End of a Kingdom, and*<sup>6</sup>  
*its Circuit to the Ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.* Happy are the People that are in such a Case ; They have great Reason to Bless, who are thus Blessed of the Lord. But,

2dly, As the Virtues and Vices of those who Govern, operate on all Inferior Ranks of Men, in the way of Natural Causes, so have they another, and a more Extraordinary Effect ; inasmuch as God doth often take Occasion to Reward, or Punish a People, not only by the Means of  
Good,

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VIII.

Good, or Ill Princes, but even for the Sake of them. Plain Instances of this kind we have recorded in Scripture; particularly, where Subjects have suffer'd for the Iniquities of those who were set over them, and the Vengeance, Merited by the One, hath been Inflicted, and, as it were, Transferr'd on the Other. Whether it be, that the good, or ill Conduct of Rulers is sometimes Owing to their People, and may therefore justly be Imputed to them; or whether (as in the case of Visiting the Sins of Parents on their Children), by making them mutually liable to the Consequences of each Others Actions, God intends to imprint a Mutual Concern and Endeavour for each Others Welfare, and to Unite them together in the strictest Bands of Interest, and Affection: Whatever the Reason of God's dealing in this manner with Princes and States may be, sure we are, that he doth thus deal with them, and that this is one Chief Article in that Scheme of Political Justice, by which he governs the World. And can there be a better

Argu-

Argument for our Interceding with God SERM. VIII.

in the behalf of *Kings, and all that are in Authority*, than This, That we are really at such times interceding for our selves? Since We may be chastis'd for Their Transgressions, and reap the Rewards of Their Piety and Goodness? Further,

3dly, The Cares of Empire are great, and the Burthen, which lies upon the Shoulders of Princes very weighty; and, on This account, therefore, they Challenge, because they particularly want our Prayers; that they may *have an Understanding Heart, to discern between Good and Bad, and to go out and in before a great People*. With what Difficulties is their Administration often clogg'd by the Perverfeness, Folly, or Wickedness of those they govern? How hard a thing do they find it, to inform themselves truly of the State of Affairs; where Fraud and Flattery surround, and take such pains to mislead them? How nice a Task is it, to distinguish between the Extremes of allowing too much Liberty, and affecting too



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VIII.

too much Power? To what Daily Dangers are their Persons expos'd, from the Attempts of Treachery, and Violence? How particular and pressing are the Temptations, to which the Height of Power, they have attain'd, makes them liable? They are above the reach of Fear, Reproof, and most of those Outward Checks, which God has plac'd, as Guards upon Private Mens Virtue; and are, on that account, in great danger of letting loose their Appetites and Passions into all manner of Excesses, without an Extraordinary degree of God's Restraining Grace; which, therefore, it becomes, and concerns us to beg of Him, and for Them.

Christian Charity and Beneficence, is a Debt, which we owe to Kings, as well as to the Meanest of their Subjects. But how shall we extend our Good Offices to Those, who move in so High a Sphere? how, but by applying our Selves to One, that is yet higher than They, even our Common Lord and Master; and humbly implore the Aids of his good Spirit, to

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VOL.

*and Thanksgiving for Princes.* 289

Comfort, Support, and Guide them? SERM. VIII.  
This is the Only Compensation, or Return, which most of us are capable of making to them, for their Vigilance, and Concern for the Publick Safety, the Pains which they take, and the Hazards which they run, to secure it.

And, to encourage our Requests in their behalf, we may consider, in the

4th place, That the Providence of God doth, in a very Particular manner, interpose towards swaying the Wills and Affections, directing, or over-ruling the Intentions of those who sit at the Helm: for *the King's Heart is in the Hand of God, as the Rivers of Waters; He turneth it, whithersoever he listeth*: He gives a Bent to it, this way, or that; which it takes as certainly, and easily as a Stream is deriv'd into the Channels, which the Hand of the Workman prepares for it. On this Foundation Our Church professes to build the Duty, and the Expedience of praying for Princes: *We are taught* (says She) *by thy holy Word, that the Hearts of Kings*  
VOL. I. U are

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VIII.

*are in thy Rule and Governance, and that thou dost dispose and turn them, as it seemeth best to thy godly Wisdom.* Indeed, the Spirit of God operates on the Spirits of All Men; but not in so Copious, so Powerful, and Extraordinary a manner, as it doth on the *Spirits of Princes*, which God delighteth to *restrain*, and, by that means, to shew himself *Wonderful among the Kings of the Earth*. It is the chief Care, the peculiar Province, the great Prerogative of the King of Kings, to rule the Thoughts of Those, who rule the Actions of Others; and thereby to bring about the Ends, the mysterious and inscrutable Ends of his Providence. And, 'tis well for mankind that there is a Being, who hath, and exerciseth such a Power; for, unless there were, Human Power, left to it self, would make wild work in the World; the Chariot of Government would be often, and dangerously misguided by Rash Unskillful Drivers, did not an Invisible Hand hold the Reins, and gently direct the Course of it.

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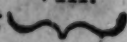
The Scripture seems to intimate, that God hath appointed Tutelar Angels, to act under him, for this purpose; at least, that such Ministring Spirits there were, before the Erection of the Mediatorial Kingdom of our Saviour: for, in *Daniel*, we read of Particular Princes, or Patrons, assign'd, from the Angelic Host, to the *Gracians*, and *Persians*; in order, as is piously believ'd, to Encourage, Enlighten, and Protect the Governours of those Estates and Empires. We are interested more nearly in the Welfare and good Conduct of Princes than those Ministring Spirits are; shall we not have some share in procuring it? Ought we not with our utmost Zeal to assist Those, whom God, for our sakes, vouchsafes in so Eminent a Manner to direct, and assist? and, what better way of assisting them have we, than by our *Supplications and Thanksgivings*? Which, let me add, in the

Last Place, are never, on this Occasion, so becomingly and forcibly address'd to God, as in the great Congregation.

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VIII.

ence require as Publick and Solemn Acknowledgments; and the Proper way of obtaining Mercies, which affect Many, is, by pouring out the Joint-Requests of Many in behalf of them: for in the Spiritual, as well as the Carnal Warfare, Numbers are most likely to prevail. The Ancients, therefore, represent the Strength of such United Devotions by that of an Army, Encompassing, besieging God; not to be defeated, or resisted by him. *Coimus*

*Tertullian.* *ad Deum* (saith one of them) *ut, quasi Manu factâ, Precationibus eum ambiamus; hæc Vis Deo grata est:* “ We come together in Troops, as it were, and surround God with our Prayers; this Violence of ours is well-pleasing to him.” We Then Ask, and we Then give Thanks, with the greatest Alacrity and Earnestness, and, consequently, with the surest Hope of Acceptance, and Success, when we excite and warm each other into this Holy Performance; and, with One Heart, and One Mouth, utter the Awak’ning Words which the Devout Psalmist us’d, at a Solemnity like This, which

which we are now met to celebrate: *This* SERM. VIII.  
*is the Day which the Lord hath made; let*   
*us be glad, and rejoice in it. Help now, O* PL. CXVIII.  
*Lord; O Lord, send us now Prosperity.* 24, 25, 27.  
*God is the Lord, who hath shewed us Light;*  
*bind the Sacrifice with Cords, yea even to*  
*the Horns of the Altar.*

I have explain'd the Grounds and Rea- III.  
 sons of the Duty, intimated to us in those  
 Words of the Text: *For this is Good, and*  
*Acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*  
 I proceed to consider the special Motive  
 there propos'd, to quicken us into the  
 Exercise of it: *That so we may lead a Quiet*  
*and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and*  
*Honesty.* I shall briefly shew, in what re-  
 spects the Devotions recommended by the  
 Apostle contribute to this End; and how  
 far, therefore, our Own Ease, Advantage,  
 and Happiness is concern'd in paying  
 them. And

1st, They have a Plain Tendency this  
 way, as they are a Prevailing Argument  
 with God, so to dispose and incline the  
 Minds of Princes, that they may study

U 3

to



to promote the Quiet, Good and Prosperity of their Kingdoms. If we believe our Prayers to have any effect, we cannot doubt their Usefulness in This Particular; which is too evident, to need a farther Enlargement.

2dly, Such Prayers facilitate our *leading a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and Honesty*; inasmuch as they express, in the most significant manner, our Love, and Zeal, and Reverence towards the Persons of Princes: and by such Instances of Duty invite them to make us suitable Returns. They effectually prevent those Jealousies, which Men cloth'd with Sovereign Power are too apt to entertain of their inferiors; and promote that good Understanding between them, which is the Common Interest, and should be the Common Aim of Both; and wherein the Security, and Happiness of all well-order'd States chiefly consists. The Holy Wishes and Vows we make for Their Welfare, will engage their unwearied Endeavours for Ours; and the Thanksgivings put up by us for

the

the Tranquillity, we enjoy under their  
Reign, will move them to afford us fresh  
and frequent Occasions for New ones.

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VIII.

Particularly, the Church is in This  
way best capable of giving Aid and Assi-  
stance to the State; and, by that means,  
of deserving, and securing it's Protecti-  
on, and Favour. This is the Spiritual  
Tribute, and Custom, which she pays to  
the Supreme Magistrate; and for which  
she receives, in Exchange, all the Tem-  
poral Blessings and Encouragement, that  
flow from the Munificence of Princes,  
and make her not only to Subsist, but  
Flourish.

3dly, *A Quiet and Peaceable Life* is the  
Fruit of these Publick Devotions, as We  
our selves derive from thence a Spirit of  
Meekness, Submission, and Respect to  
our Superiors, and are led into an Habi-  
tual Love and Practice of those Mild Gra-  
ces and Vertues, which we, at such times,  
solemnly exercise, and pray God to inspire  
us with; and which, when generally  
practis'd, make Crowns sit easie on the

SERM.  
VIII.

Heads of Princes, and render Them, and their Subjects, equally a Blessing to Each Other. Such as sincerely pray for the Prosperity of a State, are not likely to disturb it themselves, or to push on Others into Attempts against the Peace of it: They come out of the Church, still more Devoted to their Prince, and Country, than they went in; more Zealous, and better Qualify'd to discharge their Duty to the Publick, in their several Places, and Stations.

IV.

I have sufficiently explain'd the Exhortation of St. *Paul*, and the General Arguments, and Motives, by which he enforceth it. The best way of closing, and applying these Reflections will be, to take a View of the Character of those Princes, on whose behalf the Apostle presseth on the Christians of his time the Practice of this Duty, and from thence to shew, how much stronger Obligations We are under of complying with it. And

1st, The Princes, for whom the Apostle pleads, were Infidels, *without Christ*,  
 Eph. ii. 12. *Aliens*



*Aliens from his Commonwealth, and Strangers from the Covenants of his Promise; and* SERM. VIII.

such also they were, by the Permission of God, to continue for Three Hundred Years after the Coming of our Saviour; that so his Gospel might not owe it's first Establishment, in any degree, to the Secular Powers; but might spread and fix it self every where, without their Help, and against their Will; and manifest to all the World its Divine Original, by the Miraculous manner in which it should be propagated.

The Kings of the Earth were not, during this Period, to promote the belief of the Gospel, any otherwise than by Opposing it. When the rest of the World had come in, and own'd our Saviour, Then, and not 'till Then, were the Rulers of it to submit their Scepters to the Scepter of Christ; to Embrace, Protect, and Encourage his Doctrine, but not to Plant it: that, in This Sense also, the Prediction of our Lord concerning the Progress of his Kingdom, and the Call of Believers, might be verifi'd, Matth. xx. 16. that *the Last of Men should be First; and the First, Last.*

If,

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If, then, the Tribute of *Supplications* and *Thanksgivings* was due to those Heathen Princes, is it not much more due to those who are Christians? who are ingrafted, as Principal Members, into that Mystical Body, of which *Christ Jesus* is the Head? who, under him, are the Chief Governours of his Church here below, and Guardians of all her Sacred Rights and Privileges? They beseech, and they praise God together with Us, in the same Common Assemblies; and We are, therefore, doubly oblig'd to beseech, and to praise God for them. It may be observ'd, in the

2d place, That the *Roman Emperours*, for whom the Apostle here directs, that Prayers should be made were Usurpers, and Tyrants; who acquir'd Dominion by invading the Liberties of a Free People, and were Arbitrary and Lawless in the Exercise of it. Their Will and Pleasure was the sole Standard of Justice; Fear was the Foundation of their Government, and their Throne was upheld

only by the Legions which surround-  
ed it.

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Even for such Rulers the first Christians were exhorted to Supplicate, and give Thanks. How much more reasonably and chearfully do We, who are met here this Day, now offer up that Sacrifice for a *Queen*, who wears the Crown of her Forefathers, to which She is Entitled by Blood, and which was plac'd on her Royal Head, not only with the Free Consent, but with the Universal Joy and Acclamations of her Subjects? who rules a Willing People, not by the Terror of Rods and Axes, but with the Indulgent Tenderneſs of a Common Parent? who deſires rather to be Belov'd, than Fear'd by them, and takes the trueſt way toward ſecuring their Utmoſt Love, by ſhewing, in every Step of Her Gracious Conduct, that She entirely loves them? who hath no Intereſt, can have no Intereſt, ſeparate from Theirs; and upon whom Malice it ſelf could never faſten a Suspicion of her purſuing any Meaſures, which aim'd rather at Her  
Own



Own Glory, or Advantage, than the  
Common Good of England?

The Law is as much a Rule to Her, as to the least of Those who obey her; the first Measure, not only of Her governing Power, but even of Her Will to govern; and She makes no other Use of that Power, with which the Laws have invested Her, than to give Life and Force to them.

The Blessings of Her Mild and Merciful Government descend from the Throne upon Her People, *as the Small Rain cometh down into a Fleece of Wool*, without Vehemence, or Noise; *like the Drops of Rain, that water the Earth*, gently, and insensibly. She draws up the Free Offerings of our Love, and Duty, only to return them back again in Showers of Royal Bounty; which make glad the Land, and produce a mighty Increase.

Ps. lxxii. 6.

Surely, our Lips cannot be better employ'd, than in Praising God for such mighty Benefits, as these, and for the Blessed

Blessed Hand, through which he con-  
veys them !

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VIII.

3dly, Those who govern'd the World, at, or near the Time of *St. Paul's* writing this Epistle, had no Personal Merits, or Vertues to recommend them to the Prayers of the Faithful. *Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero*, under whom the Christian Faith was disseminated, and for all whom, we may presume, the Faithful equally made their Supplications, were not only Bad Princes, but Bad Men; infamous for their Lust, Cruelty, and other Vices: but they were in *Authority*, and that gave them a Right to be mention'd in the Stated Offices of the Church.

How different from Their Case is Ours, whose Eyes behold on the Throne a *Queen*, who deserves to sit there, as well by Her Vertue, as by Her Birth; Who, in that Publick and Exalted Station, preserves all the Innocence and Sanctity of a Private Life; Who is Superior to all the Temptations, which a great Power suggests,

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VIII.

suggests, and which nothing but as great Goodness ever overcomes; and to whom, therefore, Her Subjects seem to be almost as much oblig'd for the Shining Pattern of unaffected Piety, which She sets them, as for all the Other Blessings of Her Prosperous Reign. The Accession of such a Queen to a Crown is indeed a Felicity, which we may commemorate Annually, with a Devout and Sincere Joy: God grant, that we may commemorate it Often! and that we may still find more and more reason thankfully to acknowledge it!

Finally, the Emperours of *Rome*, for whom the Primitive Christians were oblig'd to Pray, and to give Thanks, were their avow'd Enemies, and Persecutors; who did, what they could, to hinder the Establishment of the Church of *Christ*, and to suppress those very Assemblies, wherein these Devotions were offered up to God in their behalf.

Whereas She, for whom we now Adore and Bless the good Providence of God, is,

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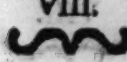


by Her Office, and by Her Inclination, <sup>SERM.</sup>  
the Defender, and Friend, the Patroness, <sup>VIII.</sup>  
and Nursing-Mother of his Church estab-  
lish'd amongst us. In this Church She  
was Baptiz'd and Bred; and, therefore,  
naturally loves it; She was made early,  
and throughly acquainted with its Do-  
ctrine, and Government, and, consequent-  
ly values it; She hath been a Religious  
Frequent-er of its Worship, and a steady  
Adherer to its Interest; and was pre-  
par'd, in the late times of Distress and  
Danger to Suffer with it, and for it.  
From Her, therefore, now She is ad-  
vanced to a Throne, all the Members,  
and Ministers of this Church may justly  
promise themselves, not only the Oppor-  
tunity of *leading a Quiet and Peaceable*  
*Life,* (the utmost which the First  
Christians could hope for from Their  
Emperours) but Farther Advantages;  
not meerly Protection, but all Suitable  
Instances of Royal Favour and Encou-  
ragement.

Witness Her late Act of Princely  
Bounty and Compassion to the Poor  
Clergy

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VIII.

 Clergy of this Church: an Act, unequalld by any Prince, nay by all our Princes, since the Reformation; and which (I was going to say) may atone for Acts of a very different kind, done in some of their Reigns. It grieved Her Religious Heart to see, that Those, who wait at the Altar, should not Partake with the Altar, in such a Measure, as is requisite to preserve the Respect due to their Characters, and to give Encouragement, and Success to their Labours. She seem'd to hear them complaining, in the Pathetick Words of the Psalmist; *Have*

Pf. cxliii.  
3. 4.

*mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with Contempt: Our Soul is exceedingly filled with the Scorning of those that are at Ease, and with the Contempt of the Proud. To rescue Them, and the Religion which they taught, from these Disadvantages, She extended Her Beneficence in the most Ample Manner; and took care to have the good Effects of it perpetuated to Future Ages; through the Cheerful Assistance of those, who Compose this Illustrious Assembly, and whose Assistance*

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sistance, we are sure, will never be wanting, to perfect any Work, that is begun for the Honour, Advantage, and Security of the Church of *England*. Scarce any but a Royal Heart, was capable of Entertaining so large a Design; as none but Royal Hands were, in a degree, equal to the Execution of it.

The Benefaction is, indeed, worthy of Her, from whom it sprung; and carries in it Marks of a Wisdom, as Extensive as Her Goodness. For it is not Confin'd, tho' Given, to those who Minister in Holy Things; the Happy Fruits, and Effects of it will, through this Channel, be convey'd to all Ranks and Orders of Men among us. All will share in that Munificence, which redounds to the Service of Religion, the Common Inheritance, and Blessing of All; and which gives Life and Weight to the Instructions of Those, who, as meanly as they may be thought of, on other Accounts, are yet *the Ambassadors of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.*



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VIII.

An Unenvy'd Bounty, therefore, it needs must be; *a Good*, which cannot decently be *evil spoken of*, even by Such (if there be any such) who wish not well either to the Objects, or the Beneflower of it.

Great and groundless Reproaches have, in other respects, been cast on Our Church, as if there were still some Remains of Popery in it. Poor Vicarages are really such; which took their Rise from the pretended Vicar of Christ, who endow'd Abbies, and Monasteries, oftentimes, with the Spoils of Church-Livings, for the Support and Maintenance of his Spiritual Tyranny. 'Twas the great Blemish of our Reformation, that, when Religious Houses were suppress'd, some Part, at least, of their Revenue was not restored to its Original Use. But the Defects of that Time were, we trust, reserv'd to be supply'd by Her Majesty; and the goodly Frame of our Constitution is to be perfected, as it was modell'd, by the Hand of a Woman.

I

A Prince,

A Prince, less solicitous for the Good SERM. VIII.  
 of Religion, though intent on such a Work, would yet have deferr'd it, till the Expensive War, wherein we are engag'd, was brought to a Close. But the Compassion, and Godly Zeal of our Gracious Sovereign would not be check'd by this Consideration: The Love of doing Good overcame all the Difficulties, which lay in the Way towards doing it. She thought, That, to Consecrate One Part of Her Revenue to so Pious an Use, would draw a Blessing on the Management of all the other Branches of it; That the *Cruise of Oil* would not fail ever the sooner, for bestowing a Portion of it on a Prophet, or any of the Sons of the Prophets; That the Earnest Prayers of Those, whom She thus reliev'd would be as Serviceable to Her in this War, as the Income it self; and that Her Charity would, in the Expressions of the Son of *Syrach*, *Fight for her against her Enemies better than a Mighty Spear and a Strong shield.* Ecclus. xxxix. 13.

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And, surely, the Unanimous and Early Dispatch of the Supplies, the Present Height of Publick Credit, and the Eagerness with which all her Subjects press to fill Her Coffers with their Loans, are not Signs, that She hath by any Act of Misapply'd Bounty hitherto lost Ground, either in the Favour of Heaven, or in the Affection, and Esteem of Her People.

May that God, whom She thus serves, and imitates, extend her Life and Reign beyond the Ordinary Term of either; and Crown every Year of them with new Instances of his Goodness to Her, and to these Kingdoms!

*Now, unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God, be Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever! Amen.*

The





The RULE of

*Doing as we would be Done unto,*

Explain'd in a

S E R M O N,

Preach'd before Her

M A J E S T Y,

At St. JAMES's CHAPEL,

On Sunday, Novemb. 5. 1704.

---

St. MATTH. vii. 12.

*All things, whatsoever ye would that  
Men should do unto you, do ye even  
so to them; for this is the Law and  
the Prophets.*

**T**HE Sentence, I have read unto SERM. IX.  
you, is very fitly plac'd towards  
the Close of our Saviour's admira-  
ble Sermon on the Mount; as being, in  
X 3 great

SERM.  
IX.

great measure, the Epitome and Sum of what the Divine Preacher had there express'd more at large. Nor is it less fitly order'd to be recited at the Holy Table, in the most Solemn part of the Service of this Day; on which we meet annually to Commemorate our Deliverance from the Attempts of those bloody and merciless Men, who seem to have out-done all their Predecessors and Successors in Wickedness, by a Notorious Contempt of this great Evangelical Rule, and of all the Principles of common Humanity. The Practice of those Conspirators was the perfect Reverse of this Precept; and we cannot, therefore, better be taught, or incited to detest the one, than by a due Illustration and Enforcement of the other. This I shall attempt, by offering to your Thoughts some Considerations, First, on the Rule here laid down; *All things, whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them*; and, then, on the short, but full *Encomium*, bestow'd upon it, that it is *the Law and the Prophets*: Which shall be follow'd by some *Inferences*, naturally arising from the whole.





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IX.

haps (were we in their Circumstances, and they in ours) might be willing enough, unreasonably willing, to obtain from them. A Benefactor is not bound to comply with the Demands of such as ask unmerited Favours, tho' conscious, that He himself might be apt to make as Extravagant Requests, were it his turn to be the Object of another Man's Beneficence. A Magistrate is not at Liberty, much less under any Obligation, to turn the Edge of Justice from an Importunate Offender; because, if He himself were the Criminal, he should certainly, and equally desire to escape unpunish'd. The Rule, therefore, which makes, what we desire of other Men, the Measure of our dealing toward them, is to be understood, not of vicious and excessive Desires, but of such only as are fit and reasonable; such Requests as we can in our calmest Thoughts, justify to our selves; such as, we are sure, may be made without Indecency, and cannot be refus'd without Inhumanity. And, under this necessary Limitation, the Precept of the Text may be thus understood; "Put thy self  
" into

“ into such a Man’s condition, and con-  
sider, what Treatment, what Favours,  
“ in That Case, thou might’st fairly and  
“ justly expect *from* Him; and be Thou  
“ sure to deal *with* Him, according to  
“ those thy just and regular Expectations.

And this I take to be the true Explica-  
tion of that other equivalent Precept,  
given in the *Gospel*, to *Love our Neigh-  
bours, as our selves*; which we may then,  
in the most proper and strict Sense of the  
Words, be said to do, when we, first,  
place our selves in our Neighbour’s  
stead, and, then, learn to love him; by  
considering, What degree of Love and  
Good-Will, of Forbearance and Forgive-  
ness we might, under that Change of  
Circumstances, challenge from him.

It may be thought, that the Rule,  
thus temper’d and qualify’d, will not be  
of any special Use, or Moment to us, in  
the Direction of our Practice; inasmuch  
as the Lines of Duty do not seem to be  
more clearly mark’d out, by this Method  
of Comparison, than they would have  
been, by a direct Injunction to us, so to  
deal

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deal with others, as right Reason and our Consciences inform us, that we ought to deal with them. For, after all, when we have made Another Man's Case Ours, we are still left to judge, what, under such a Change of Circumstances, we might, in Equity and Reason, expect from him, before we can determine, after what manner we are to behave ourselves towards him: And, therefore, which way soever we take the Measure of our Duty; to the Bar of Equity and Reason we must, it seems, in order to the fixing it, always finally appeal.

'Tis true, we must ---- But the Maxim of the Text is That, which, of all others, doth most effectually assist us towards making a free use of our Reason, and forming right Judgment of things, on such Occasions: For, by the Means of it, we are able to consider our Duty without prejudice, and to state the Bounds of it impartially and fairly. When we determine amiss concerning the Obligations incumbent upon us, in respect of other Men; 'tis by reason of that strong weight

of



of Self-love, which, like a Byass, inclines, and secretly sways our Minds towards That Side, on which our Own Interest lies. To set this Error right, we suppose our Selves to be the Men, who are to receive this Treatment from Others, which we are about to practise toward Them; and, then, the same Selfish-Principle makes that appear very hard and unreasonable, which before it inclin'd us to approve; and thus our warp'd and perverted Judgment, by being bent as much towards the Opposite side, recovers its straightness. The Rule of the Text, therefore, is, at the Bottom, a wise Art of rebating one degree of our Partiality by another; it enables us to take two several Views of our Duty, to eye it in different Situations, and under different Lights; and by that means, more distinctly and thoroughly to discern it. And, in this Sense, *Measuring our selves by our selves, and comparing our selves with our selves*, we take the surest way to be both Just, and Wise.

<sup>2</sup> Cor. x.  
12.

There's

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There's nothing, we know, that gives a Man so true and lively a Sense of the Sufferings of Others, or restrains him so powerfully from doing Unrighteous and Oppressive things; as his having smarted, formerly, himself, under the Experience of them. Now, the supposing another Man's ill usage to be Ours, is, the giving our selves a present Sense, as it were, a kind of Feign'd Experience of it; which doth, for the time, serve all the Purposes of a True one.

Upon these Accounts it is, that the Precept of the Text carries greater Evidence, and a fuller degree of Conviction in it, than any other Rule of Morality; its apparent Equity and Reasonableness, is what we are next to consider. And this is so plain a Point, as not to want, or indeed be capable of, a Solemn Proof: For the Precept manifestly aims at That, which is the known Foundation of Equity and Justice, in all Matters of Intercourse between Man and Man; the reducing things to one Common Standard,

by

by the Application of which they are all SERM. IX.  
to be examin'd, and try'd. *Thou shalt not have in thy Bag, or in thine House (said the Levitical Law) divers Weights, and divers Measures; a Great and a Small [i. e. one, wherewith to Buy; and another, wherewith to Sell:] But thou shalt have a perfect and just Weight, a perfect and just Measure shalt thou have.* Deut. xxv. 13, 14. What is said here of ordinary Traffick and Dealing, holds as true of the General Commerce of Human Life, and that Exchange of Good Offices by which Society is upheld: There must be *a perfect Weight, and a just Measure*, by which all Men are mutually oblig'd to regulate their Conduct, in acting and suffering, in commanding and obeying, in giving and receiving; and this can be no other than the Equal and Righteous Rule of the Text, the *Doing* in all Cases, and to all Persons, *even as we would be done unto.* There is no one so absurd and unreasonable, as not to see and acknowledge the Absolute Equity of this Command, in the Theory, how ever he may swerve and decline from it in his Practice; and to agree upon it as  
I that



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that Golden Mean, which, if universally observ'd, would make the World universally Happy; every Man a Benefactor, a good Angel, a Deity, as it were, to his Fellow-Creatures; and Earth, the very Image of Heaven! I need, I can say no more, concerning the Reasonableness of this Precept: However, it may help to excite and quicken your Desires, and Hopes of obeying it, if I proceed, as I propos'd, to point out some Distinguishing *Propertiz* and *Advantages* of it.

The First of which is, that it is alike easie and obvious to all Understandings, to the meanest, and most ignorant Men, as well as to those of the greatest Parts and Improvements. God is, on this, as well as on other Accounts, no Respector of Persons; having made that which is most necessary, most common, and, consequently, suited this Principle, which all Men have equal occasion to use, equally to the Apprehensions of all Men. They, therefore, who are incapable of

of long Trains in Deductions of Reason, and of adapting the several Rules of Morality to the various Circumstances of Action, are yet able (as able as the acutest Philosophers, or Casuists) to look into their own Hearts, to ask themselves this plain Question, and to return a clear Answer to it: "Would I my self be content, that others should thus deal with me? Why then should I so deal with any Man?"

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Human Laws are often so numerous, as to escape our Memories; so darkly sometimes and inconsistently worded, as to puzzle our Understandings; and their original Obscurity is not seldom improv'd by the nice Distinction and subtle Reasonings of those who profess to clear them: so that, under these several Disadvantages, they lose much of their Force and Influence; and, in some Cases, raise more Disputes than, perhaps, they determine. But here is a Law, attended with none of these Inconveniences; the grossest Minds can scarce misapprehend it; the weakest Memories are capable of retaining

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retaining it: no perplexing Comment can easily cloud it, the Authority of no Man's Gloss upon Earth can (if we are but sincere) sway us to make a wrong Construction of it. What is said of all the Gospel-Precepts by the Evangelical Prophet, is more eminently true of This; *It is an High-Way; and the Wayfaring-Man, tho' a Fool, shall not err therein.*

Isa. xxxv.  
8.

'Tis not enough that a Rule, which is to be of General Use, is suited to all Capacities; so that, where-ever it is represented to the Mind, it is presently agreed to: it must also be apt to offer it self to our Thoughts, and lie ready for present Use, upon all Exigences, and Occasions. And such, remarkably such, is that which our Lord here recommends to us. We can scarce be so far surpriz'd by any immediate necessity of Acting, as not to have time for a short Recourse to it, room for a sudden Glance, as it were upon it, in our Minds; where it rests, and sparkles always, like the *Urim* and *Thummim* on the Breast of *Aaron*. There is no occasion for us to go in search of

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it to the Oracles of Law, dead, or living; SERM. IX.  
 to the Code, or Pandects; to the Volumes  
 of Divines, or Moralists: *Quod petis, hic  
 est*; we need look no farther than our  
 Selves for it: for (to use the apposite  
 Expressions of *Moses*) *This Commandment,* Deut. xxx.  
 11, 12, 13,  
 14.  
*which I Command thee this Day, is not  
 hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is  
 not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who  
 shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it  
 unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?  
 Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou  
 shouldst say, Who shall go over the Sea for  
 us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear  
 it, and do it? But the Word is very nigh  
 unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart,  
 that thou may'st do it.*

It is, moreover, a Precept, particular-  
 fitted for Practice; as it involves in  
 the very Notion of it a Motive, stirring  
 up to Do what it Enjoins. Other  
 moral Maxims propose naked Truths  
 to the *Understanding*, which operate often  
 faintly and slowly on the *Will* and  
*Passions*, the two Active Principles of  
 the Mind of Man: but it is the peculiar  
 Character

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Character of This, that it addresseth it self equally to all these Powers; imparts both Light and Heat to us; and, at the same time that it informs us certainly and clearly, what we are to do; excites us also, in the most tender and moving manner, to the performance of it. We can see our Neighbour's Misfortune, without a sensible degree of Concern; which yet we cannot forbear expressing, when we have once made His Condition our Own, and determin'd the Measure of our Obligation towards him, by what We our selves should, in such a Case, Expect from Him: Our Duty grows immediately our Interest, and Pleasure, by the Means of this powerful Principle the Seat of which is, in truth, not more in the Brain, than in the Heart of Man: it appeals to our very Senses; and exerts its secret Force in so prevailing way, that it is even Felt, as well as Understood by us.

The Last Recommendation of this Rule I shall mention, is its Vast and Comprehensive Influence: for it extends to

all Ranks and Conditions of Men, and <sup>SERM.</sup> to all kinds of Action and Intercourse <sup>IX.</sup> between them; to matters of Charity, Generosity and Civility, as well as Justice; to Negative, no less than Positive Duties. The Ruler and the Ruled, are alike subject to it; Publick Communities can no more exempt themselves from its Obligation, than Private Persons; *All Persons must fall down before it,* <sup>Psal. lxxii. 11.</sup> *all Nations must do it Service.* And, with respect to this Extent of it, it is, that our Blessed Lord pronounces it, in the Text, to be *the Law and the Prophets.* His meaning is, that, Whatever Rules of the *Second Table* are deliver'd in the Law of *Moses*, or in the Larger Comments and Explanations of that Law, made by the Other Writers of the Old Testament, [here, and elsewhere, stil'd *the Prophets*] they are all virtually compris'd in this one short significant Saying, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them:* From this, as from their Common Source, they were all originally deriv'd; and into this they



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the Law is fulfilled in One Word, (saith  
Gal. v. 14. St. Paul) even in This, Thou shalt Love  
thy Neighbour as thy Self: and I have  
shew'd You, that this Word is the same  
in Sense with the Word, or Precept of  
Text; tho' it be not deliver'd in so clear,  
so expressive, and so convincing a Man-  
ner. And this Word, therefore, the same  
1 Tim. i. 5. Apostle calls elsewhere, *The End of the*  
*Commandment*; and St. James, *The Royal*  
Jam. ii. 8. *Law*: That, (they both mean) in which  
all the Lines of Duty, relating to our  
Neighbour, center; and under which, as  
under one common Head and Principle,  
they may be reduc'd and rang'd.

Various are the Uses, into which this  
Important Truth, thus handled, is capa-  
ble of being improv'd.

For from hence I might, in the first  
place, take Occasion to consider, Whe-  
ther, and how far, the Precept here given  
be the *Whole*, not only of the *Law*, and the  
*Prophets*, but of the *Gospel* also; and what  
Evangelic-

\* Grotius  
borum sa-  
lisur.  
tum, de  
intra hunc  
huc referr

Evangelical Duties \* there are, which seem, as the Schools speak, to *transcend* it; to be (as Myſteries are, in reſpect of Reaſon) not indeed *againſt* this great Principle, but *above*, and *beyond* it; and ſuch, as we cannot thoroughly account for, without taking the Conſideration of another World into our Schemes and Reaſonings.

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I might, in the next Place, proceed to ſhew, how large a ſhare Moral Truths have, even in the Body of reveal'd Doctrines; ſince the Precept of the Text, which comprehends only the Duty we owe to our Neighbour, is ſaid to be *the Law and the Prophets*. An Expreſſion, not indeed to be taken rigorouſly, and in the Letter! but which may however be underſtood to imply, that, as a great part of Holy Writ is employ'd in

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\* Grotius in Act. xv. 20. *Si quis dicere velit, hæc verborum ſummâ comprehendi omnia Evangelii præcepta, falſitur. Cùm præceptum de Uno Deo colendo per Chriſtum, de abnegatione Sui, de ſubeundâ Cruce, non ſint intra hunc ambitum: alia etiam non niſi obſcurè admodum hæc referri poſſunt.*

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directly pressing the Duties abridg'd in this Precept, so the Rest of it plainly points and refers to them: even the highest Mysteries of Faith were not made known to us, without some regard to our Improvement in Practical Vertues; and the Knowledge of those, unless it tends to quicken our Obedience to these, will be of no manner of service to us, will neither better us in this World, nor save us in the next.

From the Assertion, in the Close of the Text, it may be yet farther, and more clearly inferr'd, That there is a Chain of Moral Reasoning, by which the several Duties of the Second Table are connected together, and have an orderly dependance on One Common Principle, out of which they were drawn. That Virtue, therefore, is not the blind Homage of our Nature, arbitrarily exacted from us; but a Duty fitted and proportion'd to the Light of our Faculties, and every way our *Reasonable Service*: in a word, that Morality is a true and proper Science, and

Rom. xii.



and all the Parts of it capable of strict Demonstration.

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An Observation, of manifold and excellent use! for it teaches us to reject the Pretences of those vain and fanciful Enthusiasts, who have fram'd a Rule of Duty to themselves, as contrary to the Common Sense and Reason, as it is to the Current Language of Mankind; so Refin'd and Sublime, as to be utterly unintelligible and impracticable: It is not to be learn'd, or confuted, in the Method of other Doctrines; It is to be made out only by the force of some Unaccountable Impressions; by a Light, that shines inward, and which cannot be communicated, or discover'd. But *We have not* Eph. iv. 20. *so learn'd Christ*: On the contrary, we are assur'd, that we do our Lord and Master good Service, such as he will own, and reward, when we apply our selves to establish the Truths of our Religion upon Principles of Reason, and to argue Men into their Duty by appealing to Natural Light, to the Certainty of first Principles, and to the Evident Deductions

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which may from thence be made by the sure Rules of Discourse; and that we are not to regard the Censures of those, who, on this account, shall stile us mere Moral Teachers, and Carnal Reasoners; but will not allow us to speak by the Spirit, or to be at all acquainted with the Life and Power of Godliness. As if Religion were a Thing design'd cot to be understood, or made out! but lost somewhat of it's native Majesty and Force, when once we came to reason upon it!

Nor would it be an Unprofitable Reflection, to observe from hence the great Benignity and Goodness of God, who hath made even our *Own Will*, and our *Self-love*, a compleat Law of Action, and Measure of Duty to us. *All things whatsoever Ye would* [i. e. whatsoever Ye are willing] *that Men should do unto You, do Ye even so to Them!* Surely, a very Easie Yoak, and Light Burthen! We may be averse, perhaps, from submitting to the Divine Will, or to the Will of any of our Fellow Creatures, exercising Authority over us: but can we be otherwise than  
contented

contented, and pleas'd, in submitting to SERM. IX.  
our *Own* Will, whatever it is? and yet a  
submission to *That*, (when regulated by  
Proper Circumstances, and Views) is all  
that is requir'd of us. Merciful Saviour,  
thou saidst once indeed to thy Father, as  
thou wer't Man, *Not my Will, but thine* Luke xxii.  
*be done!* but who could expect, that thou<sup>42.</sup>  
shouldst have said the same thing to Us  
also, as thou art God! However, thus,  
in effect, thou hast said, in the Precept  
now before us. Teach us, O Lord, by  
the means of this Precept, so duly to re-  
gulate our Wills, that we may safely fol-  
low them! make Thy Will, Ours; that  
so, in doing our Own Will, we may be  
sure to fulfil Thine also!

We see from hence, how far the Go-  
spel is from suppressing, or checking the  
principle of *Self-love* in us, which it makes  
the Ground and Rule of all that Love we  
owe to Others; and which, therefore, we  
may Innocently, nay Usefully carry to  
what Degree, what Height we please, if  
we do but take care that the Love of our  
Neighbour keeps pace with that of our  
Self,



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Self, and is govern'd by it. Very Extravagant therefore, and Unwarrantable are those Flights of Devotion, which some Enthusiastical Saints of the Church of *Rome* have indulg'd themselves in; who make it necessary for every Christian, in order to his arriving at perfection, to divest himself of all manner of regard for himself; nay to despise, to hate, and to abhor himself, in the utmost Propriety of the Expression. Certainly, if what these Mystical Divines say, be true, impossible it is for a perfect Man to Love his Neighbour at all: since he is not allow'd, by their Scheme, to love himself; and yet is bound to love his Neighbour, as he loves himself, (or, which is all one, to do as he would be done unto) by our Lord's express Determination.

Several other weighty Truths there are, which this fruitful Theme would suggest; and most of those, I have mention'd, might deserve to be handled more largely. But I must contract my thoughts on this head, that I may have room to insist on one Plain, Useful Inference, wherein

wherein I am to apply the Doctrine hitherto deliver'd. It is this---If the Precept of the Text be so Fundamental and Necessary, so Obvious and Easie, so Sure and Safe, so Full and Comprehensive a Rule of Life and Manners; how inexcusable, upon all these accounts, must those Persons be, who, throughout the whole Course of their Actions, shew, that they do not regard it? I shall, first, expostulate the Case with such as offend against this Precept at large; and, then, consider that particular and flagrant Instance of the Breach of it, which This Day affords us.

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Are we, then, any of us, profess'd Contemners of Reveal'd Religion? I hope, we are not; but those who are, would still be thought to have a mighty reverence for Reason (since by the help of Reason it is, that they endeavour to throw off Revelation); and while they have, this its Eldest and most Unquestion'd Law should, methinks, be very Sacred to them. What! shall the great Masters of Exact Thinking, and Idolizers of Reason live

in

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in a perpetual Contradiction to the first Principle of it ! Will They, who have so Little Light to guide themselves by (that of Nature alone), neglect to make use even of that Little, which they have ? And yet, perhaps, there is no sort of Men whatever, that offend so remarkably against the Evident Righteousness of this Rule, as Those, who pretend most to magnify the Principle from whence it flows : There are none who pursue their Pleasures so keenly, and soothe all their Passions so carefully ; are every way so Selfish, and so directly set in Opposition to this Generous and Equal Maxim ; as the Men, who will tell you, They adore plain Common Sense, but cannot digest a Mystery. From whence it is manifest, that their Disesteem of Faith proceeds, not from any just Esteem they have of Reason, or any Regard they bear to its Laws ; but merely from a Spirit of Libertinism, and a desire of coming under as few Obligations as possible. 'Tis not a freedom of Thinking, which they aim at ; but a freedom of Living, and of Doing what they please, without the Control



troll of Law, or Fear of Punishment. And, <sup>SERM.  
IX.</sup> in order to this, One good Step is, to shake off Reveal'd Religion; and such an One, as is usually follow'd by another, the parting with All Religion, even That which Nature it self prescribes. To these Reasoners therefore we say, that the Rule of *doing as they would be done by* is not (what they are so jealous of) any Imposition upon their Understandings, any puzzling mysterious Doctrine; It is all Pure Light, and Evidence, *and in it is no darkness at* 1 Joh. i. 5.

*all.* Why then do They not Submit to it? Why do They, of all Men Living, do as they would not be done by? Oppress and trample upon their Inferiors, Revile their Betters, and Supplant their Equals? Carry on their Unlawful Desires, without Stint, or Bounds, to the Injuring the Property of those who are too weak to contend with them, to the defaming their Neighbour's Reputation, or defiling his Bed? Why, in a word, do they make Themselves the only Centre of all their Actions, Wishes, and Designs? and regard nothing, that is without them, any farther than it may be useful to their purposes

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purposes and enjoyments? Let us see this Lofty Race of Men in good earnest stoop to this plain Dictate of Reason; and then we shall be inclin'd to think them sincere, when they pretend to hearken to the Voice of Reason, and to that only; and may have room to hope, that the good God, who sees them honestly practising all those Vertues which flow from this Rule, will add what is behind; and, in his own time, graft Grace upon Nature.

But do we (as every one, I trust, doth, who hears me this day) profess our selves to be the Disciples of Christ? and, can we think our selves really to Be, what we profess, while we openly and avowedly break this great Precept of Christ; the main Hinge, upon which the Morality of his Gospel turns? We may boast, if we please, of our having all Knowledge, and all Faith, and of our understanding all Mysteries: but if we do not govern our Lives by this Truth, which is evident by Nature, 'twill be to no purpose, that we firmly assent to those Truths which

which are reveal'd to us by Grace. We deny Christianity, indeed, if we reject These : but if we live in contradiction to That, we renounce the Principles of Human Nature it self ; without supposing which, there can be no Christianity. Let us Profess, and Believe what we will ; unless We Do also as We would be done unto, all Our Faith, and Our Religion is vain. Nor is it Vain only, and Unprofitable, in respect of our Selves ; it is also of pernicious Consequence to Others, who, from such Instances as these, will take occasion to disparage the Influence and Efficacy of Reveal'd Religion, and to harden themselves in their Infidelity. The Ridiculers of Divine Faith, the Despisers of Mysteries, never exercise their Scornful Talent with greater Pleasure, or Success, than when they attack the Principles of Christianity, by comparing them with the Practice of Christians ; especially in this Capital Article of all Schemes of Religion, *the doing to Men as we would be done unto* ; and can point out our manifest and scandalous Violations of this plain Rule of Reason, while we pretend



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to embrace all the Sublime Doctrines, and to inherit all the Glorious Advantages of a Divine Revelation. The Heathen Emperor, *Severus*, shall rise up in the judgment with such a Generation of Christians, and condemn them: for, He, by the Light of Nature, was taught highly to reverence this Precept; it was written on the Walls of his Palace, and in the Banners of his Army; it was engrav'd in his very Heart, and transcrib'd from thence into his Practice. Would to God, that many of those pretended Vicars of Christ, who have since erected their Thrones in the Chief Seat of this Prince's Empire, had alike succeeded him in an Awful and Conscientious Regard for this Excellent Maxim, and had been, in that Respect, as good Christians, (or rather, as good Heathens) as He was! They would not, then, have become the Authors and Fomenters of all that Discord and Confusion, all those Wars and Massacres, those Conspiracies and Rebellions, with which they have, for many Centuries past, shook the Thrones of Princes, and disturb'd the Quiet of this Western World.

Matth. xii.  
41.

World. Nor would they, in order to cover and palliate these Wicked Attempts, have openly encourag'd the Casuists of their Communion to publish such loose and scandalous Systems of Morals, as, instead of being Comments on this Rule, are a perfect Contradiction to it, and are calculated, not to bring up Mens Obedience to the Terms of the Gospel, but to bring down the Gospel-Terms, as near as can be, to the Infirmities and Failings, nay to the Corruptions and Vices of Human Nature.

The Time would fail me, should I attempt to mention the most remarkable Instances, which would readily offer themselves, in either kind: That One Instance, which the Treason of This Day affords us, doth, in effect, comprehend the Wickedness of all the Rest; and is, when briefly insisted on, sufficient to raise in us a due Abhorrence of those Ungodly Principles and Practices, by which the Papacy hath enlarg'd its Interests, and establish'd its Spiritual Tyranny over the Understandings and Consciences of Men.

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The Treason of This Day was a Contrivance, Wicked and Cruel beyond Example, and beyond Expression; Such, as the Ears of any Honest Heathen when they hear it related, must tingle at. Such as, if perpetrated in the Infancy of Christianity, would have gone near to have arrested the Course of it, in Countries as yet unconverted, and to have render'd even the Miracles, done for its Confirmation, insignificant and vain: In a word, Such, as nothing but the Malice of One of that Order, which had been, ever since its first Erection, the Scourge and Pest of Mankind, could have Projected; nor Any, but some of its Begotted and Furious Votaries, durst to have Executed. Blessed *Jesu*! that ever Men more particularly calling themselves by Thy Name, and pretending more immediately to devote themselves to Thy Service, should so far forget the Law of Humanity and Kindness, which was visible in every part of thy Behaviour while thou wast on Earth, and is still legible in every Page of thy Gospel! That



they should be misled, by the perverse SERM.  
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Comments of their Own Casuists upon

this Law, so far, as to believe, that a  
Massacring Spirit was reconcilable to the  
Spirit of Christianity, and that the Ge-  
nuin Principles of it could lead, or per-  
mit Men to overturn States and King-  
doms ! Such Ill Effects may spring from  
the best of Causes, Religion, when per-  
verted and abus'd ! Such Horrid Impie-  
ties may Men arrive at, when they have  
once fix'd this Persuasion firmly in them-  
selves, That, how Vile soever the At-  
tempts are, in which they engage, yet, if  
the End be good, it justifies and sanctifies  
the Means, and that the plainest Rules  
and Duties of the Gospel do not bind  
Those, who are, as they imagin, propa-  
gating the Interests of it.

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, who  
did'st, as on this Day, after a marvellous  
manner, disappoint their Bloody De-  
signs, when they were even ready to  
take place, and did'st suffer our Princes;  
our Prelates, our Nobles, all the Chief  
Ornaments and Supports of thy pure  
Z z undefil'd

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undefil'd Religion Establish'd among us,  
 to escape out of their Hands, even as a Bird  
 from the snare of the Fowler! Surely the  
 Wrath of Man hath prais'd, and shall  
 praise thee: — The Remainder of Wrath  
 shalt thou restrain.

Psal. cxxiv.

7.

Psal. lxxvi.

10.

I need not endeavour to raise your  
 Thankfulness for the Mercies of this Day,  
 by shewing, that, as distant as they  
 are, they still belong to us. Some Bless-  
 ings wax not old, or decay; but, like  
 the Rod of the Tribe of Levi, laid up  
 in the Tabernacle, tho' seemingly sapless  
 and dead, do yet shoot, and send forth  
 their Blossoms. And such is That, we  
 now Commemorate; even Now we  
 taste the sweet Fruits and Effects of it;  
 for to this Day's Deliverance (this Day's  
 Double Deliverance) it is owing, that  
 we are freed from the Fears of Papal  
 Superstition and Bondage; that we enjoy  
 all our Religious, and Civil Liberties,  
 all that is dear and valuable to us, in  
 respect of This World, or Another; and  
 even that we see HER on the Throne  
 (the Throne of her Royal Ancestors, de-  
 sign'd

sign'd this Day for Slaughter) Who, by <sup>SERM.</sup>  
<sup>IX.</sup> sitting there, protects and secures us in  
these Enjoyments.

Great and manifold have the Instances  
been of God's Interposition to rescue this  
Church and Nation, when they most  
needed it; nor is his *Hand yet shortned*, <sup>Isa. lix. 1.</sup>  
*that it cannot save*: for, behold, what  
mighty things he hath lately wrought  
for us! in how seasonable and surprizing a  
Manner he hath bless'd the Arms, which  
have been taken up in defence of his  
True Religion, the Liberties of *Europe*,  
and the Rights of Mankind, against the  
Common Invader and Destroyer of all  
of them! whose haughty Heart he hath  
at last humbled, and stain'd his boasted  
Glory; the Vain Idol, which that proud  
Monarch set up, and commanded all  
Nations to fall down and worship! The  
Success, which God hath given us, is  
great in it self; but much greater in the  
Consequences which it seems to promise.  
For who knows but that, by this single  
Blow, the Fate of that Kingdom may at  
length be decided? of that Insolent King-



SERM.  
IX.Nu. xxiv.  
21.Isa. xlvii.  
7, 8.

dom, which thought she had put her Nest in the Rock, whether none could approach to hurt her? and seem'd (in the Expressions of the Prophet) to say in her heart, *I shall be a Lady for ever; I am, and none else beside me?* Who knows, but that the mighty Hunter of Men may, from this moment, be oblig'd to forego his Chace? may find it come to his turn, to fly, and be pursu'd every where? and have the Preys, which he hath violently seiz'd, ravish'd again out of his Hands! Who knows, but that the several Victories which he hath meanly Stollen, or Purchas'd, may now, after a more fair and generous manner, be regain'd? and all the Laurels, he unjustly wears, be torn from his Temples, and plac'd on the Head of *Another*, who better deserves them? Certain it is, that God hath already begun to do these great things for us; which, unless we are wanting to ourselves, he will as certainly finish. Already, since this Blow was given, we have seen the Happy Effects of it, in the Publick Confession of an Exhausted Exchequer, and a Languishing Credit: Evils, which,  
 God

God be thanked, are neither felt, nor fear'd by Us at home, under the present Vigilant and Wise Administration. SERM.  
IX.

Do Thou, O God, we beseech Thee,  
go on to strengthen the thing which thou  
hast wrought for us ! Shew thy Servants thy  
Work, and their Children thy Glory ! And  
the Glorious Majesty of the Lord our God  
be upon us ! Prosper thou the Work of our  
Hands upon us ! O, prosper thou our handy-  
work. Psal. lxxvii.  
28.  
Psal. xc.  
16, 17.





OF RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

SERMON

QUEEN

AT ST. JAMES'S CHURCH.

On Friday, MARCH 23, 1704.

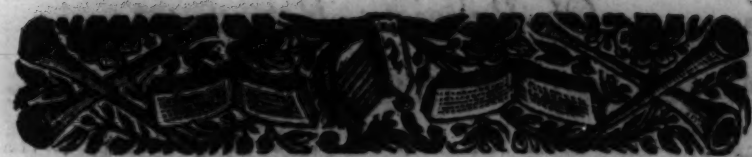
MATTH. XIV. 27.

When he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a Mountain apart to Pray.

T hath been disputed, which is a State of greater Perfection, the Social, or the Solitary. It is plain in truth, neither of these is com-







Of RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

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A  
SERMON,  
Preach'd before the  
QUEEN,

At St. JAMES's CHAPEL,

On Friday, MARCH 23. 1704-5.

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MATTH. xiv. 23.

*When he had sent the Multitude away,  
he went up into a Mountain, apart,  
to Pray.*

**I**T hath been disputed, which is a SERM.  
State of greater Perfection, the X.  
Social, or the Solitary; whereas,  
in truth, neither of these Estates is com-  
pleat

SERM.  
X.

pleat without the Other; as the Example of our Blessed Lord (the Unerring Test and Measure of Perfection) informs us. His Life, (which ought to be the Pattern of Ours) was a Mixture of Contemplation and Action, of Austerity and Freedom: We find him often, where the greatest Concourse was, in the Market-Places, in the Synagogues, and at Festival Entertainments; and we find him also retiring from the Crowd into a Desert, or a Garden, and there employing himself in all kinds of Religious Exercise, and Intercourse with God, in Fasting, Meditation, and Prayer. In Imitation of His Spotless Example, we *may*, doubtless, lead Publick Lives, Innocently, and Usefully; Conversing with Men, and doing good to them; mutually sowing, and reaping the several Comforts and Advantages of Human Society. But because the Pleasures of Conversation, when too freely tasted, are Intoxicating, and Dangerous; because the Temptations we there meet with are many and mighty; and even where the *Spirit is Willing* to resist, yet the *Flesh is often Weak*;

*Weak*; we ought, therefore, to lessen the too great Complacence we are apt to have in such Satisfaction, by fit Intermissions of them; to strengthen our selves for such Publick Encounters, by our Religious Privacies; to retire from the World sometimes, and Converse with God, and our own Consciences; examining the State, and fortifying the Powers of our Souls, in Secrecy and Silence: We must do, as our Lord did, *Send the Multitudes away, and go up into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.*

I shall, from these Words, take Occasion to discourse to you concerning the Great (but much Neglected) Duty of *Religious Retreat and Recollection*. I shall, first, briefly shew you, under what Limitations I would be understood to recommend the Duty; and, then, What the Advantages are, which arise from a devout and discreet Performance of it.

I mean not to press upon you that sort of Retirement, which is so much esteem'd and practis'd in the Church of *Rome*; where all Perfection is reckon'd to



SERM.  
X

to consist in Solitude, and no Man is allow'd capable of arriving at the height of Virtue, who doth not strip himself of all the Conveniences of Life, and renounce all manner of Acquaintance with the World, and the Things of it. I see not, wherein this State of Life claims the Præminence over all others; how it is founded in Nature, and Reason; what particular Example, Precept, or Direction there is in the Gospel, inviting us to it. *John* the Baptist is, indeed, there represented, as sequestering himself from Human Converse, and spending his

Luk. i. 17. Time in the Wilderness: but as he is said

Luk. ix. 55. to have come in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*, (a Spirit far different from the Spirit of the Gospel) and did, therefore, professedly imitate that Prophet, in his severe manner of Life, and Look, and Diet, and Garb, and Behaviour, and Doctrine; so his Example belong'd rather to the *Mosaic State*, under which he liv'd and taught, than to the *Christian Dispensation*, which began, where his Preaching ended. Nor did even the Baptist himself propose his own Practice,

as

as a Pattern to his Followers: on the contrary, when *the People, the Publicans,* and *the Soldiers* enquir'd of him, *what they should do, to flee from the Wrath to come,* he did not exhort them to go out of the World into the Wilderness; but gave them such Directions only as related to a faithful Discharge of their Duty in their several Stations and Callings: And when afterwards our Saviour began to enter on his Ministry, and to appear as our Saviour, by publishing the Gospel of his Kingdom, we find nothing either in his Actions, or his Doctrine, to countenance that Recluse and Solitary State, which some since, who would be thought best to have imitated his Example, and obey'd his Precepts, have so zealously espous'd and practis'd. His Divine Discourses were chiefly spent in pressing Men to exercise those Graces which adorn the Sociable State: even his first Sermon on the Mount to the Multitude did, in the Entrance of it, recommend and enjoin a Publick, Conspicuous, and Exemplary Vertue; and (with some allusion, perhaps, to that Eminence on which he

SERM. he sat, and the Company which surround-  
 X. ed him) he then liken'd his Disciples to  
 Matth. v. *a City set on an Hill, that cannot be hid;*  
 14. he commanded them to *put their Light*  
 Ib. v. 15. *in a Candlestick, not under a Bushel; and*  
 Ib. v. 16. *so to make it shine before Men, that They*  
*seeing their good Works, might glorifie their*  
*Father which is in Heaven.*

Far be it from me, however, to condemn all those Good and Holy Persons, who have betaken themselves to this Solitary and Austere Course of Living. Doubtless, many of them were acted by a sincere, but misguided, Principle of Piety; the Fruits of which, tho' mix'd with a great Allay of Superstition, did yet, in divers respects, redound to the Credit of Religion, and the Good of Mankind. But supposing these to be Real, yet they were, I say, Uncommanded Instances of Vertue; not possible, or, if possible, not fit to be practis'd by the far greater Part of Christians. The Retreat therefore, which I am speaking of, is not that of *Monks* and *Hermits*, but of Men living in the World, and going out  
 of



of it for a time, in order to return into SERM.  
it; it is a Temporary, not a Total Re-  
treat; such as we may leave off, or re-  
sume, at pleasure, according as we have  
Need of it, or an Opportunity for it;  
such, as is consistent with all the Busi-  
ness, and even with the Innocent Plea-  
sures of Life; and is so far from inter-  
fering with the Duties of our Publick Of-  
fices and Stations, that it disposes and  
enables us for the better Discharge of  
them. 'Tis this sort of Retreat which  
may properly be made the matter of ge-  
neral Exhortation from the Pulpit, be-  
cause it is really matter of general Obliga-  
tion to every good and sincere Christian.

No Man is, or ought to be so deeply  
immers'd in the Affairs of This World,  
as not to be able to retire from them now  
and then into his Closet, there to mind  
the Concerns of Another. Every day of  
his Life, Early, or Late, some Moments  
he may and must find to bestow this  
way; the Lord's Day particularly is a  
great Opportunity of this kind, which  
can never wholly be neglected without  
Indevo-

SERM.  
X.

Indevotion, or even without Scandal. And such also is the Annual Season of Recollection in which we are now far advanc'd; not, I trust, without having employ'd it, in some measure, to those good Purposes for which it was intended. At such Times as these, either when the Labours and Ordinary Occupations of Life cease, or when Publick Diversions and Entertainments are forbidden; Then every One, the Noble and the Mean, the Wealthy and the Poor, hath it certainly in his Power, if it be but in his Heart, to retire; to step aside from the Hurry and Vanities of Life, and all the Allurements of Sense, and to Examine, and Improve, and Enjoy himself in private.

That we may be all excited so to do, I shall proceed, in the next Place, to represent to You the several Advantages attending this Religious Practice; whether we consider it, as a Means of effacing the Ill Impressions made on our Minds in Daily Conversation, or as an Opportunity of pursuing farther Degrees of

of Perfection and abounding in all the SERM.  
Methods of Spiritual Improvement. X.

The Advantages of the first kind, which it affords us, are plainly such as These; That it unites and fixes our scatter'd Thoughts; places us out of the Reach of the most Dangerous Temptations; frees us from the Insinuating Contagion of Ill Examples, and hushes and lays asleep those troublesome Passions, which are the great Disturbers of our Repose and Happiness.

A Dissipation of Thought is the Natural and Unavoidable Effect of our Con-  
versing much in the World; where we cannot help squandering away a great deal of our Time upon Useless Objects, of no true Worth in themselves, and of no real Concern to us. We roul on in a Circle of vain empty Pleasures, and are deliver'd over continually from one slight Amusement to another; ever seemingly very Busy, and ever really very Idle; applying our selves without Respite to That, which it becomes us most to neglect, and  
VOL. I.      A a      utterly



SERM.  
X.

utterly neglectful of that One thing Necessary, which it becomes and behoves us most to pursue. This gives us by degrees such a Levity and Wantonness of Spirit, as refuses Admittance to all serious Thoughts, and renders us incapable of Reflection; makes our Closet a Terrible place to us, and Solitude a Burthen. To retrieve our selves from this vain, uncertain, roving, distracted way of thinking and living, it is requisite to retire frequently, and to Converse much with (what We above all things Love, and yet above all things hate to converse with) Our Selves; to inure our Minds to Recollection, to fix them on the greatest and most concerning Objects, those which Religion suggests, and which will, by their Importance, deserve, and engage, and command our Attention; 'till the busie Swarm of vain Images, that besets us, be thoroughly dispers'd, and the several scattered Rays of Thought, by being thus collected together, do by little and little warm our Frozen Hearts, and at last produce an Holy Flame.

The

The Expedience of Retirement is yet greater, as it removes us out of the way of the most pressing and powerful Temptations that are incident to Humane Nature. Ye all know by Experience, that These meet us most frequently, and affect us most strongly in Society; where our Senses, the great Inlets of Temptation, are most awaken'd, and tempting Objects, by their Number and Nearness, make the most Vivid and Lasting Impressions upon us. \* Indeed, there is no Place, no State, or Scene of Life, that hath not its proper and peculiar Temptations; even Solitude it self is not without them; but they are few, and faint, in comparison with those to which our Appearance on the great Stage of the World exposes us; and whenever they attack us in our Recesses, they do, or may find us pre-

\* Ὁ δὲ τὴν ἐρημίαν σέβων, πάντων μὲν ἔχει τὴν ἀπώλειαν· ἐνδέσποισι αὐτοῦ καὶ λογισμὸς ἄτοπος ὑπογράφει π τοῦτον, ἀλλ' ἀδυνάτης ἡ φαντασία καὶ ταχέως σβεδῆναι δυναμένη, διὰ τὸ μὴ προσκείσθαι ἔξωθεν τὴν ἀπὸ τῆ θεωρίας ὕλην τῆ φλογί.

Χρυσος. περὶ Γεωσυν. p. 230. Edit. per Hughes facta.

SERM.

X.

par'd, and upon our guard; we are then at leisure to encounter them, and have Helps near at hand, which, if made use of, will enable us to decline, or baffle them. Whereas, in Publick, we are merely Passive to such Impressions; which strike our Minds so violently, and succeed each other so fast, that we have no Opportunity, no Strength, no Inclination almost to withstand them.

The great Risque which Vertue runs in Company, is, from the Neighbourhood of Ill Examples, which are of so Contagious a Nature, that, if we live much amongst them, we shall as surely be corrupted by them, as he, that often breaths an ill Air, will at last partake of the Infection. 'Tis dangerous for the most Innocent Person in the World to be too frequently and nearly a Witness to the Commission of Vice and Folly. Such Views lessen the Natural Horror we have for such Actions; and render the Thoughts of them more Familiar, and less Displeasing to us. Especially, when we are us'd to see Ill Things practis'd by Persons, whom



whom we regard; the favourable Opinion we have of the Doer extends it self to the Action done; and leads us insensibly from seeing to approving, and from approving to Imitating. And thus being (the very best of us) prone to do Evil, and Living in the midst of Evil; being attack'd thus from without, and betray'd from within; we are not capable of making an Effectual Resistance: The only Refuge, we have, is in Retreat, where we may at leisure correct the Ill Impressions that have been made upon us; and, by Disuse, and Distance, weaken the Force of those Ill Influences which we could not wholly avoid.

Another Advantage which Retirement affords us, is, that it calms and composes all the Passions; those especially of the tumultuous kind; which, while the Business and Pleasures of Life possess our Hearts, are under a Restless and Violent Agitation. We seldom mix long in Conversation, without meeting with some Accident that ruffles and disturbs us; somewhat that plays either upon our

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X.

Hopes, or our Fears; our Aversions, or Desires. An Injurious, or Slighting Word is thrown out, which we think our selves oblig'd to resent; or some Innocent Expression of ours is misinterpreted and resented by Others, and That provokes a Return. Our Enemy comes in our way, and kindles Thoughts of Aversion and Hatred in us; we look upon those, who are above us in all the Advantages of Life, with Envious Eyes, and with Contempt on those who are beneath us. Thus are we deliver'd over from Passion to Passion, toss'd and disquieted in our Minds, during the Intercourse we maintain with the World. But when we quit it, and retire, all these Winds are presently laid, and there is a Perfect Calm. The Objects, which excite us, being remov'd, our Appetites also Languish and Die away; we possess our Souls in Patience and Peace, and enjoy a profound Tranquillity and Rest, the Pleasure of which is great to those who are so happy as to have a Relish for it, and is enhanc'd by being always tasted with Innocence.

Wouldst

Wouldst thou then be free from En-<sup>SERM.  
X.</sup>vy and Scorn, from Anger and Strife? fly from the Occasions of them; steal away from the great Scene of Passion and Business into thy Privacy, shut the Doors about thee, *Commune with thy One* <sup>Psalm. iv. 4.</sup> *Heart in thy Chamber, and be still.* There all Animosities are forgotten, all Pursuits, all Competitions cease; there all Marks of Distinction are laid aside; the Great and the Lowly, the Prince and the Subject are upon the Level; equally under the Eye of one Common Master, equally desirous of pleasing Him, and mindless of lesser Interests and Concerns. There the Vanities and Vexations of this World are shut out, and the Considerations of another are let in; and our Soul enjoys that sweet Contentment and Repose, which it enjoys no where else, on this side Heaven,

I have hitherto considered the Usefulness of Religious Retreat, with respect to some Ill Impressions made upon us in Conversation, which it removes; I shall



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X.

now consider it, as productive of the Chief Christian Graces and Vertues; in as much as it affords us the best Opportunity of knowing *God*, and our *Selves*, and of taking all the proper Methods to reconcile and approve our selves to God, which are Consequent upon such a Knowledge. For, tho' it be expedient for Every Rank and Order of Men, yet is it more particularly advantagious to Penitents, to go up with our Saviour *into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.*

Job xxii.  
21.

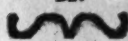
'Tis our Duty, and our Privilege, our Chief Honour and Happiness, to be *acquainted with God*; and this Acquaintance can never be made, but, where we divest our selves of all Other Acquaintance, in our Closets. When we have call'd off our Thoughts from Worldly Pursuits and Engagements, then (and not 'till then) are we at Liberty to fix them on the best, the most deserving, and desirable of Objects, *GOD*; to study his Blessed Nature and Perfections, to imprint a filial Awe of him on our Hearts, a lively Sense of his perpetual Inspection and Presence; to  
abound

abound in all the Methods of Devout Application to him, in Acts of Petition and Praise, of Joy and Wonder, of Submission and Hope, of Love and Affiance; to open all our Wants, and impart all our Grievs to him, and to express in the most significant manner, we are able, our Entire and Unlimited Dependance upon him; 'till, by often dwelling on such Thoughts and Reflections as these, we have made them Familiar, Habitual, and Natural to us; and can have as Easie and Delightful a Recourse to God, in all Accidents, and upon all Occasions, as a Son hath to a Belov'd and Loving Parent, who, he knows, is at all Times able to assist, and ready to receive him: In a Word, 'till we can look up to God in Each Step of our Conduct, as the Supreme End and Guide of all our Actions, the fix'd Centre of all our Wishes, Desires, and Designs; 'till we bring ourselves to Love Nothing in Competition with him, nothing but in order to the Enjoyment of him; and resolve to Do nothing, and Be nothing, but what we are sure will please him,

Can

SERM.

X.



Can any thing refine, raise, or ennoble our Natures more than such a Conversation as This, which is thus begun, improv'd, and perfected in Solitude? Shall we not think it worth our while, to cease for a time from cultivating Useless and Perishing Friendships with Men, that we may be the more at Leisure, and the better qualify'd, to enter into this Divine Correspondence, which is of the vastest Concern to us, and upon which our Everlasting Welfare depends?

While indeed our Hearts are deeply engag'd in the Concerns of this World, we cannot well relish the Pleasures of such a Spiritual Commerce: but, after we have once accustom'd and inur'd ourselves to it, we shall find it the most delightful Entertainment of the Mind of Man, pleasing as Light to the Eyes, *sweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb*. Sensual Men may make sport with such a Pretence, and call it Enthusiasm, and the Product of an Heated Imagination; but They, that taste the Satisfaction,  
know



## Of Religious Retirement.

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know it to be real, and would not part <sup>SERM.</sup>  
with it for all the Delights this World <sup>X.</sup>  
can afford; and which (in the disparaging Phrase of the Apostle) they *count but as dung*, in comparison of *the Excellency of this Knowledge of God, and Christ Jesus.* <sup>Phil. iii. 8.</sup>

As Religious Retirement is a great Means of advancing us in the Knowledge of God, so doth it assist us towards attaining a True Knowledge of Our selves; towards searching and trying all our ways, and getting a right Information concerning the state of our Consciences. He that will thrive in his Temporal Affairs, must often ballance his Accounts, examine his Gains, and his Losses, and see what proportion they bear to each other; consider, where his Conduct may have been faulty in any respect, and how for the future to rectifie it. The same Vigilance and Care is requisite in relation to our Spiritual Concerns also; and we can never exert it effectually but in the Closet, where Privacy and Silence befriend our Enquiries. When the Im-  
portunity

SERM.  
X.

portunity of Outward Objects ceases, when the Noise and Avocations of a troublesome World are at a distance, we may enter upon these Searches without difficulty, and finish them without Interruption. We may then look inwards, and take a Distinct View of what at Other times passes there unobserv'd; of our hidden Inclinations and Aversions, of the Springs which secretly move us in all our Pursuits, of the Temptations that beset us hardest, and most frequently foil us, of the Ground that we have lost, or got, in our several Encounters. And when we are advanc'd thus far in the Knowledge of our selves, and of our Ruling Sins and Infirmities, we have taken the most useful and necessary Step towards abounding in the Three great Duties of the Penitent, *Contrition, Resolution, and Prayer.*

*Contrition* is an holy Grief, excited by a lively Sense, not only of the Punishment due to our Guilt, (That the Schools call *Attrition*), but likewise of the Infinite Goodness of God, against which we have

have offended; accompany'd with a De-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
testation of our Sin, and of our selves,<sup>X.</sup>  
for the sake of it. At this Act of the  
Mind Repentance (properly speaking)  
begins; and this Godly Concern of Heart  
is rarely attain'd, to be sure, it can ne-  
ver be duly exerted, and improv'd, but  
in private. And, therefore, in the Sto-  
ry of St. Peter we may observe that,  
as soon as a Conviction of his Guilt  
had seiz'd him, it is said, that *he went* <sup>Matt. xxvi.</sup>  
*out, and wept bitterly*; he withdrew into<sup>75.</sup>  
a Secret Place, where he might mourn  
his own Fall with freedom; where he  
might feed, and raise up to a due height  
the Inward Anguish he felt, and indulge  
himself in all the Expressions of sincere  
Sorrow. The Wounds of Conscience,  
like other Wounds, tho' generally re-  
ceiv'd in Publick, must always be heal'd  
in Private: There they may be laid open  
and search'd to the bottom, there the  
raging Smart of them is best endur'd,  
and there suitable Remedies are most  
easily, and most usefully apply'd; where  
Leisure, and Rest, Silence, and a Pro-  
per



SERM.  
X.

per Discipline assist the Patient, and promote the Cure.

The next Step to Contrition is, *Resolution*, or a firm immutable Purpose of Heart, never more to allow our selves in that Transgression, which we now abominate, and deplore. And, in order to the forming such a well-weigh'd and stable Resolution, there must be a calm and clear foresight of the Difficulties which may attend the Execution of it, and a just Computation of our Own Strength to bear up against them; we must deliberately consider, under what Circumstances the Temptation, against which we are now arming our selves, hath beset us hardest, and how, for the future, we may best decline them; what Helps and Supports we have by Experience found most useful, and how, in the Day of Tryal, we may be secure of them; to what a broken dispirited State of Mind we have already reduc'd our selves, by so often and lightly departing from what we had purpos'd; and, with how much greater difficulty, every time that we  
give

give way, we recover our ground. I SERM.  
X.  
need not prove to you, that these, and the  
like Reflections, which are necessary to-  
wards our Resolving well and wisely,  
can never be dwelt on, in all their due  
Compass and Force, but at Leisure, and  
in Sacred Retirement. Doubtless, the  
good Psalmist had been some time in his  
Closet, and on his Knees, when he ut-  
ter'd those Emphatical Words; *I have* Psal. cxix.  
*sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy* 100.  
*Righteous Judgments.*

But of all the Duties of the Penitent,  
that which Privacy best Qualifies us for,  
is \* Prayer; which it enables us to per-  
form in such a Manner, as is likely to be  
most prevalent and effectual. Great in-  
deed is the Excellence and Advantage

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\* Την ερηκον εις το ορος αγαβαιναι, παιδευων ημας  
δη καλον η ερημια η μονωσις, οταν εσυχναειν διη τη  
διω. Δια του συνεχως εις τας ερημιας απεισι, κακει δια-  
σκηρευει πολλους ευχιδωρος, παιδευων ημας η αφοδω  
και η την απο του τοπου διεαδαι εν ταϊς ευχαϊς ατα-  
ραξιαν, ησυχιας γαρ μητη η ερημος, η γαληνη, η λιμνη,  
απαντων απλλαττουσιν δορυζων ημας. Chrysost ad Matthe.  
xiv. 23.

of

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X.

of Publick Devotions, as they testify our Common Reverence of the Divine Being, as they are best fitted to improve, or to acknowledge Publick Blessings, and as they excite a Publick Emulation in the Breasts of Sincere Worshippers. However, in some Respects, they must yield the Preheminence to Closet-Prayer; particularly in This, That they are not so well calculated, as That, to procure Ease and Repose of Conscience to the Sinner, and to adjust particular Accounts between God and our Souls. For it is of special use to this Purpose, in these Three Respects; as it affords us the best Opportunity of being *Fix'd, Fervent, and Circumstantial* in our Addresses to God.

In the Solemn Service of the Sanctuary, let us endeavour never so much to prevent *Distractions*, we shall now and then be sensible of them: Outward Objects will break in upon our Senses, and divert the Application of our Minds; even the Length of the Office, and the Daily Return of the same Forms, will, to Persons



sons not rightly Qualify'd and Dispos'd, SERM.  
X.  
occasion Spiritual Languors and Wandrings. And this is not the Case only of Stated Forms ; the same Inconvenience doth, in a much higher degree, belong to Unpremeditated Prayer ; the Hearers of which must first judge of the Fitness, both of the Matter and the Expression, before they can reasonably join in what they hear. And thus the Novelty of the Phrase, instead of fixing, breaks and divides the Attention of a sincere Worshipper ; his Curiosity indeed may be awaken'd by this means, but his Devotion is certainly check'd and suspended. Now these Obstacles are all remov'd, these Inconveniences are prevented, when we pray in Private. We are then plac'd immediately under the Eye of God, which awes us ; but under no Other Eyes, and in the neighbourhood of no other Objects, which might divert or discompose us : we are at Liberty to employ that Part of our Time in the Performance of this Service, when we find our selves best dispos'd for it ; to make Choice of our own Thoughts,

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and our own Words; such, as are best suited to our present Necessities, and Desires: and what is thus passing within our selves, we cannot but perceive, and attend to. We may break off from the Duty, whenever, we find, our Attention flags; and return to it, at a more seasonable Opportunity.

Nor are we capable, at such times, of being more *Fix'd* only, but likewise more *Fervent* and *Inflam'd*. True Religion is ever Modest and Reserv'd in its Demeanor, when it appears in Publick; jealous of doing any thing that may favour of Vanity and Ostentation; unwilling to allow it self in any such Earnestness of Speech, or Singularity of Behaviour, as may call off the Eyes and Ears of Others to observe them: It contents it self, for the most part, with a Compos'd and Serious Look, with a Simple and Unaffected Carriage. But when Publick Regards and Restraints are taken off, the Pious Soul may then let it self loose into the highest Fervors of Zeal, into the freest Raptures of Thought, and

and into a suitable Vehemence, and Warmth of Expression: there is no sort of Holy Address, which it is not then allow'd to make use of; no outward Signs of Devotion and Reverence, which it may not decently abound in.

There is yet another great Advantage that attends our Private Devotions; They give us leave to be as Express and Particular as we please in our Representations. In the Church, the Sinner and the Saint, Men of all Ranks, Distinctions, and Attainments in Vertue must join in the same Common Forms: and tho' each of them may, by a sudden Glance of Mind, adapt the General Words to his own Circumstances; yet one Branch of the Service presses too fast upon another, to admit of any Pause between them. And They, therefore, who lie under the Load of any Particular Guilt, rise not from their Knees with so much Comfort, as they would have done, had they been at Liberty to dwell upon it, and confess it in all its Aggravations. This Liberty their Closet, and that alone, can



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afford them. There they may Expatiate as much as they please upon their Wants and Unworthiness: There they may pour out all their Complaints to God, and lay open all their Grievs, and Fears, and send up all their Thanks and Acknowledgments: There Importunities are not forbidden, Repetitions are not unbecoming; but they may persist Knocking 'till it is Open'd to them, and Asking 'till they have Obtain'd.

These are some of the many Spiritual Advantages, which the present Hours of holy Recollection, when well employ'd, will be sure to afford us. And God grant, that All of us may, as we have Opportunity and Leisure, so employ them!

Indeed, the greater our Sphere of Publick Action is, the less Time we can allow our selves to spend in these Religious Exercises; but still Some of it is due to them, nor can any Secular Cares, or Avocations whatsoever wholly excuse us from paying it. Our Blessed Lord,

we

we are sure, had very great Business to transact with Mankind, and a very short Time in which to finish it; and yet, during his Three Years Conversation on Earth, we find him often exchanging the Duties of the Active and Publick State, for those of the Solitary and Private; *sending the Multitudes away, and going up into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.* And we are sure, that in This, as well as Other Respects, he left Us an Example, <sup>2 Pet. ii. 21.</sup> that we should follow his Steps.

To Him, together with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, Three Persons, and One God, be ascrib'd all Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and for evermore. Amen.

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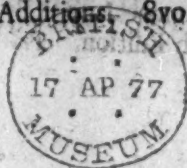
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